



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





LIFE OF CHRYSOSTOM.

MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,  
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

J O H N  
OF THE GOLDEN MOUTH;

*PREACHER OF ANTIOCH,*

AND

*PRIMATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.*

BY

WALTER MACGILVRAY, D.D.,

MINISTER OF GILCOMSTON FREE CHURCH, ABERDEEN.

‘Τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώττης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέει αὐδὴ.’—  
HOMER.

‘An eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.’—  
ACTS XVIII. 24.



LONDON:  
JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET.  
1871.

110. j. 303.



27

28

## P R E F A C E.

---

COMPELLED by the state of his health to retire for a couple of years to a quiet country-house, where he was subject to fewer interruptions than usual, the writer of the following pages was led to renew his acquaintance with a branch of study which has always possessed special attractions for him, and to which he has at different periods of his life paid some attention—namely, the History of the Early Church.

Among the crowd of 'mighty men, and men of renown,' who came before him in the course of his reading, the man whose character awoke the deepest interest in his mind was John of the 'Golden Mouth,' the famous preacher of the patristic age, and probably the greatest pulpit orator who has appeared since the days of the apostles. There is certainly no other whose career is so remarkable, or whose fame has continued so fresh. While nearly all 'the burning and shining lights' of these remote times are reduced to mere specks, resembling the brilliant dust of the milky way, it may be said of him, that

'His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.'

Finding that there was no single volume in our language which contained anything like a complete or satisfactory account of this illustrious Father, and feeling at the same time that his life, otherwise so full of



'moving accidents' and memorable events, reflected, as in a luminous mirror, all the lights and shadows which marked so portentously the last days of the Roman world, the author was impelled—rashly perhaps, but yet irresistibly—to begin the work which he now ventures to offer to the public. Whatever its merits or defects may be, he cannot say that it is an offering which has 'cost him nothing,' as it has occupied, in one way or another, all the spare time at his disposal for several years.

Having thus resolved to make the attempt, there was one painful but powerful consideration which helped to confirm him in the resolution to which he came: it is the use made by certain parties of the authority of the Fathers for the purpose of 'unprotestantizing,' as they call it, the Evangelical Churches of this kingdom, and that Church in particular at whose altar many of them are still serving, and whose bread they are not ashamed to eat—the 'Reformed Church of England.' Regretting the existence of those ecclesiastical ties by which the old alliance between Rome and Canterbury is kept up, the author is yet very sensible of the invaluable services which the English Church has rendered to the cause of Christ in these Islands—the varied and splendid contributions she has made to the Christian literature of Europe, as well as the noble army of martyrs, confessors, and faithful labourers she has trained for service at home, or sent forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

But while expressing frankly what he holds to be wrong and unscriptural in the case of other Churches, he is far from imagining that all is right with that Church to which he himself belongs. While he did not grudge to pay his share of the ransom at which her freedom was bought, and while he has sacrificed as much as any, and more perhaps than most, for his attachment to her prin-

ciples, he is not blind to those blemishes by which her inner life has always been more or less disturbed, and her influence for good diminished. No intelligent reader of these pages can fail to perceive the lessons and allusions which apply to her as well as to other bodies similarly constituted. If the councils of the early Church—the cabals of the bishops, the intrigues of the rulers, the trivial contentions and mutual recriminations of the sects—if these historical warnings are overlooked by the members of our religious communities, then all the author can say is, ‘Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.’

The author is hopeful that this work may be welcome, not only to the intelligent laity in general, but to all aspirants to the holy ministry in particular. He has sought truly to record the life of a man who was the foremost preacher of his day, and the secret of whose strength it is supposed they will wish to learn; that they may mark those rare gifts which met in him, and conspired to make him not only the most eloquent instructor of his own time, but a guiding load-star to all after ages. Robertson of Brighton has said very justly, that ‘high thoughts, and aims, and feelings are caught by contact with the loftiest minds, far more than by any didactic discourses.’ The author believes that hardly any one can peruse the biography of this incomparable Father—can read his passionate and powerful utterances—can witness his steadfast faith amid all the changes of fortune—without having his ‘thoughts, and aims, and feelings’ raised to higher ends and finer issues than before.

It only remains to add, that the writer is indebted for much kind assistance, in the way of extracts, suggestions, and new translations, to the Rev. Alexander Davidson, of Cleator, Cumberland, and the Rev. Harry Nicoll, of Auchendoir, Aberdeenshire,—the first, one of the ripest

scholars, and the second, one of the most learned and accomplished country ministers, in the kingdom. Besides these, there is yet another—a very old and very dear friend—to whom he can apply the words of Paul concerning Timothy, that ‘as a son with the father he has served with him’ in this case; not only going over all the proof-sheets and furnishing many valuable notes, but completing and *crowning* the volume by his very striking chapter on Chrysostom as a Christian orator,—the Rev. David Neilson, Free Church, Renfrew.

THE AUTHOR.

TORQUAY, DEVON, *24th March 1871.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS.



## I.

### THE ANGEL OF THE HOUSE.

The apostles—Their successors inferior to them intellectually and spiritually—The appearance of more distinguished Fathers—Chrysostom's position among them—The great preacher of the early Church—His parentage—His widowed mother—Her character—Notices of some of the Christian females of the fourth century—Monica, Nonna, Emmelia—Their influence in favour of Christianity—The exclamation of Libanius : ' See what wives these Christians have !' 1

## II.

### SCHOOLS OF THE RHETORICIANS.

Chrysostom designed for the bar—Trained by Libanius the Sophist—Character of Libanius—The high estimation in which he was held by the Emperors and statesmen of the time—Branches taught by the rhetoricians—Their special attention to the art of public speaking—Neglect of this in our modern systems of ecclesiastical training, with its influence on the cause of religion and the state of the Church, . . . . . 14

## III.

### LIFE IN THE DESERT.

Chrysostom, under spiritual concern, quits the bar and withdraws to the desert—Monks of Antioch, their character, habits, and manner of living—The veneration with which they were regarded—John of Lycopolis—Their supposed prophetic powers—Way of accounting

for their foresight—Edict against them by the Emperor Valens— Chrysostom's first work in their justification—Theodorus—Defence of Monachism by Chateaubriand and Montalembert—Their argu- ments examined, . . . . .	25
--	----

IV.

STUDENT OF THE WILDERNESS.

Chrysostom's studies—His careful examination of the Scriptures—The benefit he derived from this—Its effect on his ministry afterwards —His exegetical training under Diodorus—School of Antioch—Its distinctive characteristics—Importance attached by the Fathers to the study of the Scriptures—Picture of Chrysostom and his friend Theodorus going in from the desert to attend the Bible class at Antioch—No theological seminaries at this period—School of Alexandria, . . . . .	41
--	----

V.

THE GATE OF THE EAST.

Chrysostom's illness and return to the city—Description of Antioch— One of the three great capitals of the East—Its geographical posi- tion—Local situation—Architectural features—Crowned female, Daphne, etc.—Inhabitants, a mixture of Greeks and Jews—Its early connection with the Apostolic Church—Headquarters of Gentile Missions—Notorious for its luxury and social corruptions —Chrysostom's altered character and views—Appointment to the office of deacon—Treatises on Contrition and the Priesthood— His elevation to the rank of presbyter—First public sermon at Antioch, . . . . .	52
---	----

VI.

THE OLD CHURCH OF ANTIOCH.

Its name, site, and general aspect—No decorations and no images— Manner in which divine service was conducted up to this period— Extémpore prayers—People standing—Congregational choirs and vocal music—Complaints of the introduction of a theatrical style of singing—Times and seasons of public worship—Applauding the preachers—Practice borrowed from the schools of the rhetoricians —Chrysostom's disapproval of it—His arduous labours as the chief preacher of the city, . . . . .	66
--	----

## *Contents.*

xi

### VII.

#### THE RELIGION OF THE GOLD RING.

Christ anointed to preach the gospel to the poor—Was the first who devoted His ministry to that class—Appreciated by them, while rejected by the priests and rulers—Those who resisted Christianity and adhered to paganism longest were the Roman aristocracy—The main cause, their being educated in the schools of the Sophists—Distinguished exceptions to this rule—Emperors, statesmen, and leading nobles, members of the Church—Chrysostom's chief difficulty arose from the influence of the pagan aristocracy on the upper class of professed Christians—The 'last days' of the Roman world, . . . . . 77

### VIII.

#### PASTORAL DIFFICULTIES.

Work of preaching—Congregational rivalries—Two recognised bishops at Antioch—Chrysostom's efforts to heal existing divisions—His controversies with the Eunomians, Protopaschites, and Pagans—Remonstrances with the formalists—His pulpit preparations—Impromptu addresses—Their effect—Highest efforts of oratorical genius lost to the world, . . . . . 88

### IX.

#### INSURRECTION AT ANTIOCH.

Oppressive act of the Government—Rising of the people—Statues of the Imperial Family pulled down and dragged through the streets—Antioch in the hands of the mob—Insurrection quelled—Panic and flight of the principal inhabitants—Chrysostom's premonitions of danger—His exhortations to restrain and punish blasphemers—Flavian sent to intercede with the Emperor—Public executions—Interposition of the monks—Their courage, independence, and great public influence at this period, . . . . . 102

### X.

#### THE CITY PREACHER.

Success of Flavian's mission—Spirit and speech of Theodosius—Great rejoicings at Antioch—Public meetings at the Church—Chrysostom's position at this time—His daily addresses—Influence of

trouble on the state of the inhabitants—Chrysostom's services as a guide and comforter—How such services are generally appreciated—Homilies on the statues, . . . . . 118

## XI.

## RURAL BISHOPS OF SYRIA.

Chrysostom's sickness—Services conducted by the bishop in commemoration of the martyrs—Chrysostom's views on the subject of saints' days—Gibbon's account of the origin and growth of relic-worship—Rural bishops—Their social and ecclesiastical standing—Prelatical episcopacy, how introduced—Jerome's opinion on the subject, and the views of the leading Fathers—The manner in which the teaching elders were deprived of the right of ordination, and subjected to the authority of the metropolitan bishops, 135

## XII.

## CALL TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

How Chrysostom laboured at Antioch—The estimation in which he was held—The general effect of his character and ministry there—His appointment to the imperial see of Constantinople—The state of the diocese—His immediate predecessors—Gregory of Nazianzen—His labours, writings, and personal qualities—Church leaders—Council of Constantinople—Gregory deprived of his office—Succeeded by Nectarius, a senator of the city, who had to be baptized in order to qualify him for entering on the episcopal office, . . . . 154

## XIII.

## CITY AND COURT OF BYZANTIUM.

Description of Constantinople—Its situation, architectural features, public monuments, institutions, and inhabitants—Court of Arcadius—His marriage to Eudoxia—Her birth, education, early character—Rufinus and Eutropius—The origin, ambition, and extraordinary career of the latter—Influence over the Emperor—Sale of Government offices to the highest bidder—Beggars on horseback—Statement of the poet Claudian, . . . . . 172

## XIV.

## THE FAITHFUL AMBASSADOR.

Chrysostom's prospects—Theophilus of Alexandria appointed to officiate at his installation—Refuses till compelled by Eutropius—

## *Contents.*

xiii

The bishop's style of teaching—Example in parable of the talents—Human learning depreciated by monks and sacerdotalists—Mass-priests and extemporized bishops—Chrysostom's faith in the Scriptures the source of his freedom from priestly errors, and the secret of his success as a preacher, . . . . . 186

### XV.

#### ‘NOT OF THIS WORLD.’

Our Lord's relation to the world—Warnings to, and by, His disciples regarding this point—‘All that is in the world’—Pentecostal Church—Views of the ascetics—Chrysostom's mode of life at Constantinople—False position, and difficulties arising therefrom—Milton's views on that subject—Offence taken by wandering bishops at Chrysostom's style of living, and alleged want of hospitality—Explanatory note, . . . . . 200

### XVI.

#### TROUBLED WATERS.

Relations with the society of the metropolis—Chrysostom's actions more guarded than his words—Scandals and depositions among his clergy—Charges brought by Eusebius against the Bishop of Ephesus—Investigation, with deposition of Eusebius—Death of Antoninus—Competition for the vacant see—Chrysostom sent for to restore order—Case of Eusebius re-opened, his charges proved, and six bishops deprived for simony—Archbishop returns through Nicomedia—Deposes Gerontius—Novatians, their views, and controversies concerning them—Sisinnius and the other sectaries joining Chrysostom's enemies—The gross bribery which prevailed in the ‘Church Primitive and Catholic’—Milton's statements regarding the condition of the Church and the cause of its corruptions; with his quotations from Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto, . 215

### XVII.

#### RELIGIOUS CIRCLES OF THE METROPOLIS.

Troubles at Constantinople—Non-resident bishops—Severian and Antiochus—Conduct of the former while acting as Chrysostom's substitute during his absence—Antiochus and he plotting with his



Emperor Honorius, Innocent of Rome, and Western bishops with that view—Their efforts frustrated by Chrysostom's enemies—Second banishment to Pityus on the Euxine—Dies at Comana on the way—His dream fulfilled—Buried beside the martyr Basiliscus—Remains brought thirty years afterwards to Constantinople—Theodosius II. kneels on his coffin, and confesses the sins of his parents against him—His ashes finally removed to St. Peter's at Rome—Reflections—Notes on Chrysostom's missions, 321

## XXIV.

## 'THE GOLDEN MOUTH.'

His renown as a Christian orator—Distinctive features of his character and teaching—His excellences and defects—His position in the history of the Church—The greatness and freshness of his fame, . . . . . 346

## I.

### THE ANGEL OF THE HOUSE.

'Thy fame, thy worth, thy filial love at last,  
Shall soothe this aching heart for all the past—  
With many a smile my solitude repay,  
And chase the world's ungenerous scorn away.'

CAMPBELL.

THE men who sat at the Master's feet, and then went forth to repeat the lessons which He taught them, and to 'disciple' all nations in His name, had, strictly speaking, no successors. Whether we look at the special commission they received, or at the spiritual gifts with which they were furnished, we cannot fail to observe that they stood alone, distinguished alike from those who laboured with them and from those who followed them, in the ministry of the Church. This holds true, in particular, of that body of extraordinary messengers who were left at the head of the cause, and to whose testimony Paul refers as forming the chief groundwork of the Church's faith; for he tells us that believers are 'built on the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*,<sup>1</sup> Jesus Christ Himself being the *chief cornerstone*.'

The line of 'pastors and teachers' by whom these inspired men were succeeded, occupied quite a different position from them. They not only lacked the supernatural endowments of which 'the apostles and prophets' were possessed, but stood probably as far below

<sup>1</sup> Not apostles alone, but 'apostles and *prophets*.' See Acts xiii. 1, xv. 32; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iii. 5, iv. 11.

them in their moral and intellectual as they did in their spiritual stature. We have only to compare the extant remains of the early fathers with any portion of the New Testament canon, to see this at a glance. The contrast is so great as to bring out into strong relief the immense superiority of the sacred writers, and to make us thoroughly sensible of the fact that their mantle did not fall upon any of their followers.

But still the race of converts by whom their place was supplied were well fitted for the work to which they were called. Humble as they were, both in point of education and worldly position, it may be doubted whether the Church has ever since possessed a more faithful or a more successful band of spiritual labourers. They loved the gospel well; they toiled day and night to promote it; and not a few of them laid down their lives in testimony of their attachment to it. Whether in action or in endurance, they sustained nobly the credit of the Christian name, and showed that a new power was now let down upon the world, which did not depend on individual men, or demand the possession of splendid gifts as the condition of its exercise. In Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, Pliny's letter to Trajan, and in other documents relating to this period, the glimpses which are given us of the state of the Church reflect the highest honour on those simple pastors to whose guidance its interests were committed, and by whose ministry its members were trained.

But while the post-apostolic age is pointed to by all our ecclesiastical writers as the purest in the annals of the Church, it is perhaps the only age from that time to the present in which no great leader, no eminent preacher, no single man of any mark, is to be met with. What the prophet says of Christ Himself, was also fulfilled in the history of His cause: it 'grew up like a tender plant, and like a root out of a dry ground,' with-

out noise or notice of any kind. One of the writers to whom we have referred, remarks that 'the vast majority of the early converts were men of low rank; and their numbers were concealed by their obscurity, until they became too powerful to dread persecution. Up to the middle of the second century they could scarcely discover among their thousands *one learned man*.'<sup>1</sup> The saying of Paul, true as it was in his own day, was still more signally verified in this case: 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; *that no flesh should glory in His presence*.'

From what has just been stated, it will be observed that nearly two hundred years had elapsed ere any individual of commanding note had arisen to draw the attention of the world to the progress of the Church, while another century had almost run its course before the great lights of the patristic age began to make their appearance. But from the beginning of the third century down to the middle of the fifth, group after group of bright 'morning stars' came forth in rapid succession, heralded by Origen in the East, by Tertullian and Cyprian in the West, until the whole breadth of the ecclesiastical horizon was crowded with these burning and shining lights; Eusebius, Hilary, Athanasius, Basil, the three Gregories, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine—such is but a mere selection from the roll of great names which grace the annals of this period.

The illustrious men we have just mentioned were of course distinguished by great diversities of gifts. Some,

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Church*, by Dean Waddington, p. 29.

like Origen and Jerome, were noted for their exegetical accomplishments, others for their theological and spiritual attainments, as Augustine and Athanasius, Basil of Cæsarea, and Gregory of Nazianzen ; while a few, of whom Ambrose was the most eminent, made themselves conspicuous by their judicial wisdom and public weight. But in that which constitutes the primary function of the Christian ministry—the function specially set forth in the Master's commission, to wit, the preaching of the word—there was one whose pre-eminence is now, as it was even in his own day, universally acknowledged. This was John of Antioch, who laboured for some time as deacon and presbyter in that city before he was called to the Imperial see of Constantinople. Of him it may be said without exaggeration, that he was not only the most effective expositor of divine truth, but by far the most eloquent spiritual teacher who had appeared in the Christian assemblies since the days of Paul.

In an age when oratory was so much prized as to form the readiest passport to office both in the Church and in the State, he stood unrivalled. The three who came nearest to him in this particular department were Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory of Nazianzen, but none of them possessed the rare combination of qualities which gave Chrysostom such an extraordinary mastery over the minds of others, and made him at once the Demosthenes and the Cicero of the early Church. Bold as this comparison may seem, we use it advisedly ; for although the man of the 'golden mouth' was not equal to these great Gentile orators either in point of intellectual or rhetorical power, he yet displayed in his discourses some of the best qualities of both, while he left deeper and more lasting impressions on the hearts of his hearers than was ever done even by him

'Who shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece.'

And, if we take into account the nature of the cause which he advocated, the hallowed zeal that quickened and inspired his glowing utterances, together with the great and enduring ends at which he aimed, no impartial judge can refuse to admit that he stands

‘Above all Greek, above all Roman fame.’

John, better known by the surname of Chrysostom, or the ‘Golden Mouth,’<sup>1</sup> was born at Antioch in 347. His parents were of noble rank, and connected with the best families in the city. Of his father all we know is, that his name was Secundus, and that he held some appointment on the staff of the military governor of Syria. He died early, however, leaving his wife Anthusa a widow at twenty years of age, while John was yet an infant. Bereaved of her husband so soon after their marriage, she remained single during the rest of her life, devoting herself to the care of her only child. Although possessed of some personal attractions, and of a competent fortune, she was a woman of earnest piety, and was, to use Paul’s word, ‘a widow indeed,’—one of those who would have regarded any change of condition as a stain on their moral reputation, or at least on their Christian profession. It is interesting to mark the number of females of this high-minded order who come before us in the annals of that age. Whatever we may think of the scruples by which they were influenced, it cannot be denied that they were of no vulgar kind; while the state of religious and social feeling out of which they arose will bear more than a favourable comparison with the lax and, we must be allowed to add, less refined sentiments of modern times.

There is another point in this connection which cannot be overlooked, and that is, the part which these Christian

<sup>1</sup> So called on account of his unrivalled eloquence. The name was a traditional distinction given to him, not in his own day, but a couple of centuries afterwards.

Matrons took in the training of their families. Of the strong and healthy influence they exerted in this direction we are furnished with many striking illustrations. The case of Monica, the mother of Augustine, is too well known to need more than a passing reference ; but there are so many outstanding instances of the same kind to be met with at this period, that we cannot fail to see how much the cause of Christianity owed to the domestic ministrations of these noble women. Basil of Cæsarea and Gregory of Nazianzen are among the men of note who received their earliest impressions of religious truth in this way. The first, like Timothy, was trained by his grandmother Emmelia, with whom he passed his youth in a lonely part of Pontus. Emmelia herself was brought up under the pastoral care of Gregory Thaumaturgus. The lessons she had heard from the lips of that venerable man she instilled into the ears of his youthful grandson, whose heart the Lord had opened to give heed to her counsels ; and before she died, she had the rich reward of seeing Basil the beloved raised to the bishopric of Cæsarea, and of hearing him hailed throughout all the churches of the empire as 'Basil the Great.'

Gregory of Nazianzen we mentioned as another example of the gracious influence of maternal training. His father, though a bishop and a good man, was so much occupied with the affairs of his diocese, that he had to devolve the work of family instruction on his wife Nonna ; and we have reason to know that the duty laid upon her was not neglected. Her eldest son, Gregory, she took with her to the house of God as soon as she was in a condition to go thither ; and placing a copy of the New Testament in his unconscious hand, she then and there devoted him, as her 'first-born,' to the service of the Lord.

But, touching and beautiful as this incident is, it gives

us but a faint indication of Nonna's character and worth. Her second son, named Cæsarius, studied medicine, and being a young man of superior attainments, was appointed Imperial physician at the court of Constantinople, where he was at the time when the Emperor Julian (the apostate) came to the throne. This prince, anxious to seduce those who were in any way connected with him from the cause of Christ, and to enlist them in the service of heathenism, employed all the arts of persuasion upon Cæsarius. His family were very anxious about him. Gregory, his brother, wrote to him, and said, 'How can thy father, the bishop, exhort others not to be carried away by the times? How can he exercise discipline on offenders in any other quarter, when in his own family he has no ground for joy?' They endeavoured to conceal the state of things from his mother, knowing how acutely her faithful heart would be wounded if her son yielded to the Emperor's solicitations. But the young physician, says Neander, 'held the gospel to be a pearl for which everything must be parted with, and *he quitted the court rather than injure the cause of God.*'<sup>1</sup>

This was indeed a most impressive testimony to the character of Nonna's training; and a circumstance which makes it still more noticeable is, that the son who had displayed so noble a spirit, had not as yet made any public profession of the Christian faith, for he was still unbaptized. But after he had resigned his appointment at the court, an event happened which was the means, under God, of bringing him fully within the fold of the Church. While residing at Nicæa, in Bithynia, where he held a public office (though one of much less importance than that which he had surrendered), an earthquake occurred, which overthrew the greater part of the town, and left it a complete wreck. Among the build-

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of Christian Life*, by Augustus Neander, Bohn's edit. p. 175.



ings destroyed was that in which Cæsarius dwelt. Being in the house at the time the shock took place, the walls fell in upon him, and he was buried, as it seemed, under his own roof. Contrary to all expectation, however, he escaped with his life, and was dug out of the ruins without sustaining any serious injury. This wonderful deliverance made a deep impression on his mind, as may well be supposed. While engaged in thinking over it, a letter arrived from Basil of Cæsarea, who had heard of the case, and was anxious to turn the occasion to some good account for the spiritual benefit of his friend. It is remarkable to find Emmelia's pupil coming to the help of Nonna's at this crisis. The letter he wrote to him is so admirable, that it is with great reluctance we withhold it, for fear of tiring the reader with too many details. Suffice it to say, that it was the means of bringing Cæsarius to a decisive resolution, for he immediately applied to be baptized, and admitted into the membership of the Church. He who had been buried under the ruins of his own house, and rescued in such a marvellous way, was now 'buried with Christ in baptism, wherein he also rose with Him unto newness of life,' which in this case was but a preparation for and a prelude to life eternal, as his earthly career came to a close very soon thereafter. In the same spirit which led him to sacrifice the pleasures of a court and the favour of an emperor rather than injure the cause of God, he said to those who stood around him, just as he was dying: 'I leave all I have to the poor.' Noble Cæsarius! Happy Nonna!—mother of at least two sons who were twice born, and who, through grace, both owed their double birth to thee!

In order to show still further the influence of female training during the fourth century, and to illustrate the state of mind and manners that prevailed at this period, we are tempted to add another example to those we

have just adduced. It is connected with the history of Theodoret, whose name appears among the great Christian writers of that time. His mother, like Anthusa, was a lady of rank, and, like her also, a native of Antioch. In early life she was fond of gaiety, and took her full share in those fashionable dissipations which were pursued nowhere with greater zest than in the voluptuous capital of Syria. While she was yet young, however,—at the age of twenty-three,—she had an attack of ophthalmia, which threatened to deprive her of her sight, and compelled her to withdraw for a time from the bustle of society. During this interval of retirement she was led to ‘commune with her own heart, and be still.’ The result was that she felt dissatisfied with her condition, and began to be seriously concerned about her spiritual wellbeing. Getting no relief for her malady from her physicians, she had recourse to the prayers of a monk whose intercessions were supposed to be of great avail. When she called upon Peter (for that was his name), the first thing he did was to comment upon her dress, and to reprove her very sharply for coming to him in such gaudy apparel; declaring that it was nothing less than an insult to the Creator, to attempt to improve on His workmanship by artificial adornments. This was rather a discouraging reception; but Peter, seeing her submit so meekly to his reproof, thought better of her character, and proceeded to attend to her case.

Telling her that her recovery depended more upon her own faith than on any power of his, he drew his hand over her eyes, made the sign of the cross upon them, and forthwith the disease was removed. Whether the cure was quite so rapid as was commonly reported, or whether it came in a more gradual and less miraculous way, may admit of some doubt; but that Peter’s prayers had a decisive influence on the issue the patient herself firmly believed, and hence the incident became

the turning-point of her life.<sup>1</sup> She withdrew from the gay circles of Antioch, and devoted the rest of her days to the exercises of religion, and to the advancement of its interests. Being still childless, Peter and his friends besought the Lord on her behalf, that this mercy also might be added to that which she had already obtained. Their prayers appear to have been answered, for, not long after, Theodoret was born. As he grew up, his mother brought him regularly, once a week, to visit the good monks of the desert. Peter was very kind to the little boy, took him up on his knee, and regaled him with such monastic dainties as bread and grapes. Macedonius, a member of the same fraternity, was also very friendly, and bestowed upon him, among other things, a great deal of good advice. 'My son,' he said to him, 'your birth has cost much toil. Many nights I have kept awake to pray God to give you to your parents. Lead, therefore, a life worthy of such efforts. From your birth you have been dedicated to God (alluding to his name Theodoret, the *God-given*), and what is consecrated to Him is to be honoured by all: it must not be touched by the vulgar.' It is only necessary to add, that the hopes of his anxious mother were not disappointed. Theodoret gave himself in due

<sup>1</sup> 'It is one thing,' says the author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, 'to compose a gaudy narrative (*de virtutibus*) of the wonder-working powers of a saint gone to his rest in the preceding century, and another to be the actor in scenes of religious juggling. Some foolish presbyter or busy monk, gifted with a talent of description, has collected the church tales current in his time concerning a renowned father or a remarkable saint. The turgid biography, applauded in the monastery where it was produced, slipped away silently to the faithful of distant establishments, and, without ever having undergone the ordeal of *real and local publicity* which authenticates common history, was diffused, as it were, beneath the surface of notoriety, through Christendom, and so has come down to modern times, to load the memory of some good man with unmerited disgrace' (pp. 243, 244). And yet it is evident in this case that Theodoret himself believed his early friends to be possessed of something like miraculous power.

time to the work of the ministry, was appointed Bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, and published a number of exegetical works, which are held in high esteem among patristic scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Such cases may assist us to form some idea of the spirit by which the Christian women of that age were animated. Those we have mentioned were all connected with the higher ranks of society, but we have no reason to suppose that their humbler sisters were less zealous in their own sphere. The great apostle of the Gentiles tells us that 'not many wise, or noble, or mighty are called;' that they are 'the poor of the world' who are most commonly found to be 'rich in faith;' and the history of the Church proves that this holds more or less true in every age. It certainly did so at the period before us; for while the great body of the people had embraced the faith of Christ, the class who still clung most obstinately to the decaying fortunes of paganism existed among the old Roman aristocracy. But rich or poor, women have always been the best and steadiest friends of the gospel, from the days of the Marys and the Marthas of Bible history even until now. There is much, no doubt, in 'the gentleness of Christ,' and in the spirit of Christianity generally, which makes it more congenial to them than to the other sex; while there are also many circumstances connected with their position, duties, and trials, which are fitted to give it a stronger hold upon their minds.

Hence the heathen writers of that day are constantly inveighing against the women for their opposition to the old religion, and their zeal in favour of the new. These writers seemed to think (and evidently not without some cause) that it was through female influence the religion

<sup>1</sup> Even so eminent a judge as Ernesti said that he preferred his Commentaries on the Psalms to any other remains of the early Church, and recommended them to all engaged in the study of sacred exegesis.

of Christ was mainly promoted, especially amongst the upper classes. Libanius the rhetorician, one of the chief props of the pagan party, upbraided the *men* of Antioch very bitterly for allowing themselves to be swayed so much by their wives and daughters. Against the men themselves they had little to say, as they found them tolerably indifferent, taken up chiefly with their worldly affairs, and too busily engaged in the pursuit of wealth and pleasure to trouble themselves much with the religious training of their households. That part of their duty they left to their wives, who appear to have discharged it with much faithfulness and success.

Judging, however, from the ordinary principles of human nature, there must have been many who fell short of this standard. Those who came up to it were probably the best of the Christian motherhood. But, after making allowance for such elements of exaggeration as are apt to be mixed up with general pictures of this kind, it is impossible to resist the conviction, that the women of that age had a much higher sense of the responsibility connected with the religious education of their families than is by any means common at the present day. There is indeed some cause to fear that the neglect of this duty among the wealthy classes of society in this country, along with the masculine habits and *public* tastes affected by a large proportion of our best educated females, are already beginning to tell very injuriously on the moral condition of the classes to whom we have specially referred.

Of the sounder state of feeling that existed in his day, John Chrysostom enjoyed the full advantage. His mother, Anthusa, appears to have been a person of rare excellence, even among the women of that time,—tender, thoughtful, faithful,—and combining with her spiritual earnestness a more than ordinary amount of sound feeling and good sense. By these means she was

preserved—if not entirely, yet in a great degree—from many of the superstitious notions that prevailed in the religious circles in which she moved. These notions were partly due to the confronting presence of heathenism, but still more to the influence of fanatical and illiterate monks; and the records of the time show that the minds even of the most enlightened Christians were very largely tinged by them. Hence Anthusa, though quite as earnest in her piety as Nonna of Nazianzen, did not, like her, take her son to the church and devote him to the Lord; neither did she consult the hermits of the desert about his education, like the mother of Theodoret. On the contrary, she set herself, as we shall afterwards show, to resist the monkish tendencies to which Chrysostom was always more or less prone. It was through her influence, indeed, that he was kept from embracing a monastic life at the very outset of his religious career. And thus, by her wise and enlightened piety, she was the means of guiding her son to his true destination; of rearing him for the work to which he was manifestly called by the voice of Providence; and of preserving to the Church the full benefit of his labours, and the rich and fruitful lessons of his ‘golden mouth.’ No wonder the pagan leader we have mentioned, seeing such women as Anthusa, exclaimed, ‘What wives these Christians have!’

## II.

### THE SCHOOLS OF THE RHETORICIANS.

*'Nobody contents himself with rough diamonds, or wears them so. When polished and set, then they give a lustre.'*—LOCKE.

THE profession for which Chrysostom was destined was the law. Whether it was his own choice, or whether he was led to select this career by the advice of his friends, we are not told; but it seems that his mother did not oppose it. The training ordinarily required for the Roman bar, especially in the provincial courts, was not by any means so elaborate as might be supposed. All that was considered necessary, was some technical acquaintance with the Latin style then in use in the public offices, together with a certain degree of expertness in shorthand writing. This, accompanied by a practical knowledge of the forms and general routine of legal business, was thought sufficient, in the majority of cases, to supply the place of more liberal culture, and to prepare the aspirants for even the highest departments in the State.

But Anthusa, having the means, resolved to give her son the best education his native town could afford; and, in proof of her good sense and superiority to the common prejudices of her time, she sent him to study rhetoric under a heathen teacher, simply because he was the most eminent in the place. This teacher was the same Libanius to whom we have already alluded as a chief leader among the pagans. He was indeed regarded as one of the most prominent representatives of

that party in the East,—second only in point of reputation and public influence to Symmachus, the Prætorian Prefect of Rome. Libanius was, from all accounts, the most celebrated rhetorician of his age,—a man who, along with the mythological creed, inherited much of the literary spirit of the Athenian philosophers and poets. Their works were in reality his Bible—their laws his religion. Hence he studied their writings with a feeling of devout enthusiasm somewhat akin to that with which the Christians ‘searched the Scriptures.’

It may therefore be supposed that he was quite at home in the classics—thoroughly acquainted with all those wonderful phases of thought and feeling which characterize the marvellous productions of pagan genius. Possessed of some original talent, as well as of a highly cultivated taste, Libanius was distinguished at the same time by moral qualities of the old heroic type. Hence he stood high in the estimation of all parties, not excepting even the more enlightened followers of that faith whose principles he sternly contested, and whose progress he steadily opposed. Such indeed was the respect in which he was held, that he was not only consulted on questions of public interest by the chief men in the State, but was on terms of acquaintance and correspondence with some of the emperors themselves.

‘When Julian ascended the throne,’ says Gibbon, ‘he declared his impatience to embrace and reward the Syrian sophist who had preserved, in a degenerate age, the Grecian purity of taste, of manners, and of religion.’ The spirit in which Libanius received the Emperor’s advances is sufficient to show the character of the man. He was a student, and did not care to become a courtier, deeming it a higher distinction to live like the old philosophers of Greece, than to be dependent on the caprices of the great. He who could act as Libanius did in this case, who not only sought no favours at the hands of



Julian, but who respectfully declined his patronage and all his offers of preferment, must have possessed no ordinary depth and dignity of mind. While he did not profess to be a cynic, he was certainly anything but a flatterer or time-server.<sup>1</sup>

It was therefore a singular privilege to be placed under the care of such a master, and to receive the lessons of so consummate a professor of ancient literature. This privilege was one which the son of Anthusa was prepared to appreciate, from the kindred tastes with which he was himself imbued, and which at this period influenced him very strongly. Like all other youths of the same imaginative cast, he came under the powerful fascination which the poetry and philosophy of Greece are always found to exert over those in whom there is anything of the *mens diviniior*, as, in the finest sense, there was in him. Libanius was too acute a man not to discover this, and he therefore laboured to develop his powers to the utmost. Knowing that his pupil was destined for the bar, he sought especially to perfect him in the art of public speaking. With this view, he set John to study the great masterpieces of ancient eloquence, which he taught him to repeat in the way of recitation. His familiarity with these imperishable compositions, his practice in reciting their noblest passages, and his efforts to match their style and catch their

<sup>1</sup> This celebrated *sophist* was born in the capital of the East. In the early period of his life he visited Nicomedia, Constantinople, Athens, and other cities, in which he taught his art, but finally settled in Antioch, where, after a long and brilliant career, he ended his days. His writings are nearly all in the epistolary form, and about 2000 of his letters are still extant. Though regarded by his contemporaries as models in this style of composition, they hold a much lower place in the judgment of modern critics, who generally concur in 'slashing Bentley's' opinion. 'You feel,' says that writer in his *Dissertation on Phalaris*, 'by the emptiness and deadness of them, that you converse with some dreaming pedant with his elbow on the desk.'—See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 9, Bohn's edition, with note.

spirit, must have exerted a wondrous influence upon the student, and powerfully conduced to render him what he afterwards became,—the orator, *par excellence*, of the patristic Church.

Humble as Chrysostom's advantages may seem when compared with those enjoyed by the students of our day, they were by no means so inferior as we might be apt to imagine. It is true that, instead of passing through a regular course of university training under a number of professors, he had but one teacher. But that teacher, as we have seen, was one of a thousand, while the branches which his system embraced comprised the most important of those that form the main part of the curriculum in our best academical institutions. Latin, Greek, Logic, Moral and Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, Ancient History, Mythology, Jurisprudence,—all these, with other cognate branches, were taught in the schools of the rhetoricians, and taught, so far at least as the ancient languages and the philosophical departments are concerned, with a degree of insight and skill such as can only be acquired by instructors who are themselves of the native mould, and 'to the manner born.' But if there was any department in which the sophists excelled, it was in that of oratory. This was the point to which their efforts were mainly directed, and the grand object they aimed at was to educate their disciples for, and to complete them in, this splendid accomplishment. Nor were they much mistaken in regarding the power of *perfect utterance* (including, along with the outward expression, the inward furniture of thought and style) as the grandest and the kingliest of all the arts—the highest result of mental discipline—the bright consummate flower of cultivated intelligence.

We have lost something, especially as regards the influence of the pulpit, by overlooking the lessons of

the past. We complain of dull sermons, and of dreary Sabbaths. 'Tis true, 'tis pity; pity 'tis, 'tis true.' But how can it be otherwise, when almost the only things that are ignored in our great public seminaries are the very things that are required to give life and interest to our churches? The students of our time are well grounded in all the essential ingredients of a good education; their minds are stored with facts and philosophies, rules and examples, of every possible kind; but their rhetorical tastes and their artistic capabilities are well-nigh totally neglected. It seems to be assumed that elocution, like common speech, comes by nature; and hence there is no provision made for it, or next to none, in our systems of ecclesiastical education.

While it may be granted that no kind or degree of training can make a good speaker of one who lacks the necessary qualities, yet no one can doubt that it will help to remedy natural defects where they exist; nor can it fail to improve the delivery of those who possess the gift of utterance in *any measure*, however small. And if they are so devoid of good sense and good taste as to let their elocutionary training *be seen*, if they are disposed to *display* their oratorical powers, then the only thing that can be said is, that they have mistaken their profession.

Strange as it may appear, there are some clergymen who *despise* the art of public speaking, or at least who pretend to do so. *They* would not exercise the gift even if they had it. Whether such statements might not be accounted for by the fable of the fox and the sour grapes, we shall not undertake to say; but the lofty contempt with which men of this stamp talk of 'popular preachers' is something very curious. Why, their Master, if they knew it, was a 'popular preacher;' His apostles were 'popular preachers;' all our great Reformers were 'popular preachers;' and the whole of

those men who have been most instrumental in rousing, quickening, and purifying the churches, throughout every age from the beginning, were 'popular preachers.' What, we ask, is the meaning of this contemptuous phrase? What *is* popular preaching? It is neither more nor less, so far as we can see, than the power of preaching so as to impress the minds of the people; and we venture to say that the man who lacks this power, who cannot speak so as to excite the interest of his hearers, is just a man who cannot *preach to any profit*. It is not pleasant to say it; but that, we suspect, is the plain English of it. Such a man, whatever his merits or attainments otherwise may be, is unfit for the office of the ministry, because he wants the most fundamental qualification which that office requires. The great original commission given to the Church, and to every individual minister belonging to it, is, 'Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel* to every creature.' That commission still remains in force, though some would like to alter its terms, and substitute other things for the one great duty it holds forth; and he who cannot discharge the duty in question, who cannot 'preach the gospel' to any effectual purpose, or, in other words, he who is not a 'popular preacher,' and who even affects to scorn the very idea of such a thing, has certainly no claim to be regarded as a true successor of the apostles. He does not stand within the terms of the Master's commission, and had better seek out some other occupation.

It is because 'incumbents' of this class are allowed to occupy the pulpits of our churches, that there are so many complaints about dull sermons, and so great a demand for canonical play-actors and Sunday operas. Unless, therefore, the 'dumb dogs that cannot bark' are kept out, and those who have forced their way in got rid of as speedily as possible, our places of worship will

soon be emptied of their hearers, and converted, as so many are already, into recruiting offices for the Church of Rome.

Returning to Chrysostom and Libanius, it is stated by Neander—on what authority he does not say—that the pagan teacher tried to tamper with the religious principles of his pupil, in the hope of gaining him over to his own party. It is clear that Libanius was a keen zealot ; but such conduct is not at all consistent with the honourable spirit by which he was distinguished ; nor could it fail, if known or suspected, to damage his professional interests, as the Christians of that period were very particular with regard to this point. Still the accomplished historian by whom the charge is made is usually so accurate and conscientious, that he would not have mentioned the fact without having some good grounds for it. We can only suppose, therefore, that this was an exceptional case, and that Libanius, who saw the early promise of his brilliant pupil, was tempted by the desire to secure his advocacy in favour of the heathen cause.

A letter of the master, still extant, in which he congratulates his scholar on the success of his first oratorical efforts, witnesses to the great expectations he had formed of John. It is further stated that the pagans looked upon him as being, for a time at least, favourably inclined towards their views, and complained that the Christians had stolen him from them. It is even said that Libanius, on his deathbed, lamented Chrysostom's seduction from heathen to Christian studies, as he intended to have made him his successor in the school, as well as in his office of chief defender of the pagan interest.<sup>1</sup>

If there was any real foundation for these statements (certainly noticed by contemporary writers), they warrant the inference that Chrysostom had not yet become

<sup>1</sup> *History of Christianity*, by the Rev. H. H. Milman, vol. iii. p. 206.

very decided in his opinions, and was perhaps more alive to the attractions of classic literature than to the claims of the Christian religion. It seems, however, that he was led by his mother to study the Scriptures in private; and it is to this circumstance that his preservation from the snares of Libanius is ascribed. Though he walked for a time 'in the counsel of the ungodly, and stood in the way of sinners,' there is nothing to indicate that he ever 'sat in the seat of the scornful;' that is, that he ever gave way to sceptical tendencies. The thoughtful care of Anthusa, 'the angel of the house,' was always over him; and being induced by her gentle persuasion to meditate in the law of the Lord, he was like a tree planted by the river-side. Hence, as we shall see by and by, he brought forth his fruit in his season; and his leaf, so far from withering, grew into a great corona—a rich broad garland of never-fading green!

Chrysostom, however, for what reason we know not, soon withdrew from the bar. It is supposed that the growing influence of his religious feelings was the means of creating a distaste for the quibbling and questionable transactions with which he had to deal. But whether it was his conscience that moved him to take this step or not, it is clear that he was but ill fitted, both by taste and by temperament, for the rough collisions of the courts. Though possessed of high moral courage, and capable of displaying the most resolute firmness when circumstances called for it, he was by nature of a retiring and sensitive disposition, averse to controversies and disputes of every kind. This, indeed, was so marked a feature in his character, that, had his friends taken it properly into account, they would scarcely have advised him to follow the profession of the law, especially as it stood at that time. But while the cause just mentioned would of itself have been sufficient to turn him away from it, there is reason to believe that his mind became

so strongly impressed with the supreme importance of divine things, that he was brought wholly under 'the powers of the world to come,' and therefore resolved to withdraw from this world, and to devote himself to a religious life.

In this he was encouraged by Meletius, then Bishop of Antioch, who took a warm interest in his welfare, and persuaded him to become a public reader of the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

The office in question had been established in the Church at a very early period, and was one for which young men of promise were usually selected. It was borrowed, in principle, from the synagogue, and found to be not only useful, but in a manner indispensable, at a time when copies of the Scriptures were scarce, while the great mass of the people were uneducated, and therefore unable to read for themselves. Chrysostom becoming more deeply concerned, proposed to retire with a friend, who happened to be in the same state of mind, to one of the remotest hermitages in Syria. Such was the common practice of those who came under serious impressions at this period, when the monastic spirit prevailed strongly, and had already spread like a kind of moral contagion throughout the various provinces of the East. John, however, was dissuaded by his mother from carrying this purpose into effect.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectores*, or public readers, were introduced towards the close of the second century. The Scriptures were read at first by the presiding minister, or by the presbyters in their turn. But, about the period mentioned, a scheme of lessons, embracing the various books of Scripture, was prepared for city congregations, and readers appointed. Up to the last generation it was common in some parts of the Highlands for those hearers who came early to church to have the Scriptures read by the 'precentor' or clerk, before the regular service began. The practice appears also to have been followed in England immediately after the Reformation, when copies of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue were yet rare and expensive. The reader may have seen some of these copies, in oak bindings or boards, which used to be fastened to the pews with iron chains.

As soon as she heard of his intention (Chrysostom himself relates the incident), she took him by the hand, she led him into her chamber, she made him sit by her on the bed on which she had borne him, and burst out into tears, and into language more sad than tears. She spoke of the cares and troubles of widowhood. Grievous as they had been, she had ever one consolation—the gazing on his face, and beholding in him the image of his departed father. Before he could speak, he had thus been her comfort and her joy. She reminded him of the fidelity with which she had administered the paternal property. ‘Think not that I would reproach you with these things. I have but one favour to entreat: make me not a second time a widow; awaken not again my slumbering sorrows. Wait at least for my death; perhaps I shall depart before long. When you have laid me in the earth, and reunited my bones to those of your father, then travel wherever thou wilt, even beyond the sea; but, as long as I live, endure to dwell in my house, and offend not God by afflicting your mother, who is at least blameless towards thee.’

To such an appeal, and from such a mother, no dutiful son could turn a deaf ear. He therefore appears to have abandoned his purpose at once. But he still cherished very strongly the passion for solitude which had taken hold of him,—still yearned after some quiet retreat, where he could devote himself without interruption to the prosecution of what he calls ‘the true philosophy.’ The restlessness of spirit which he felt at this stage of his history is not difficult to understand. His mind, naturally of a thoughtful and susceptible cast, was passing through a process of deep fermentation, heaving and tossing, as it were, with the strong forces that were struggling within him. Had the pursuit for which he was educated proved more congenial to his tastes, these forces might have found vent in the active occupations of pro-



fessional life, and would soon have worked themselves out into clearness. But He who is wonderful in counsel was preparing him for another career than that which his friends had chosen for him. Hence, as if possessed with a blind consciousness of this, he felt dissatisfied with himself, dissatisfied with the world, dissatisfied with everything within and without, and, like that 'unhoused' and unhappy spirit of whom we read, he 'went up and down through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.'

### III.

#### LIFE IN THE DESERT.

*' Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these wilds  
More free from peril than the envious court?  
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.'*

SHAKSPEARE.

AT length—whether before or after his mother's death does not appear—Chrysostom's earnest craving for retirement was gratified.<sup>1</sup> Not many miles from Antioch, there stood a group of solitary hills which a band of monks had chosen as a place of retreat. While suffering from the inward fever that had seized upon him, the young lawyer often looked towards these quiet hills with something of the Psalmist's feeling in his heart—'O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away to yonder mountain, and be at rest!' To that scene of long-coveted repose he found himself at liberty to withdraw at this period; and there he remained for about six years, having now resolved to devote himself permanently to spiritual pursuits.

Nor was his conduct in so doing by any means strange or exceptional; for a number of the young men of Antioch, actuated by similar motives, shared his retire-

<sup>1</sup> It was during his mother's lifetime, for we find an allusion in one of his letters, which seems to show that Anthusa was alive at a much later period.

ment. Here, guided and instructed by some of the more experienced monks, they spent their time in religious employments, wherein prayer, and the practice of devotional music, were combined with the close study of the sacred writings. These exercises were diversified by manual occupations of various kinds, which they found to be good both for mind and body, while necessary, in some cases, as the means of providing for their temporal support. For, in these retreats, persons of all ranks met and wrought together. Servants, labourers, tradesmen, were associated with people of the highest social position, to whom they were united by the common bond of Christian fellowship. Through the industry of these various groups, the necessities of destitute brethren were supplied, and the wants of the neighbouring poor often relieved.<sup>1</sup> As may be inferred from what has been already said, particular attention was paid to the Christian education of the young, especially of those who came thither, like Chrysostom, under religious concern. It was in such communities that several of the most distinguished Fathers of the Church received that training in the first principles of Bible truth which formed the foundation of their future eminence. Like the schools of the prophets under the ancient economy, they served to a large extent the purpose of theological seminaries, before any regular institutions of that kind came to be established.

It is interesting to notice the glimpses (for they are little more) which he gives of life in the desert. 'They rise in the morning wakeful and sober; and joining together in a choir, they sing, with joyful faces and peaceful consciences, hymns to the praise of God—thanking Him for the mercies He has granted them in common, as well as for those which He has bestowed upon each

<sup>1</sup> Their work, in this case, consisted chiefly of knitting, basket-making, reading, and so forth.

of them in particular. They then, on bended knees, implore that God whose praise they have sung, for things understood by few, for they are not the things of this world. They offer up but one petition—that they may be able to stand with confidence before that dread tribunal, when the only Son of God shall come to judge the quick and the dead ; that they may never hear those terrible words, ‘I know you not ;’ and that, with a pure conscience and many good works, they may finish their course in this troubled life. Their father and director begins the prayer. This duty fulfilled, with the rising sun each goes to his work, by which they earn much to distribute among the poor.’

In another place he says :—‘After they have sung the morning hymn and finished the morning prayer, they read the holy Scriptures. For the third hour (9 A.M.), the sixth (noon), the ninth (3 P.M.), and the whole evening,—for these four divisions of the day, various prayers and hymns are appointed. When they have finished their daily work, they take their seats at the table ; and truly they have not many dishes. Some eat only bread and salt, others take oil along with these ; the weaker add herbs and vegetables. Having ended their meal with hymns, they lay themselves down on straw. No complaints are heard among them. They accompany the departed with songs, and they call this an attendance, not a burial. They say not “he is dead,” but “he is perfected.” They all then thank God, and each individual prays for such an end,—thus to have come through the struggle of life ; thus to have rested from strife and toil ; thus to have attained to the vision of Christ.’ He also gives us a copy of the prayer they were in the habit of offering up after their meals :—‘Blessed God ! who hast nourished us from our youth up, and givest food to all flesh : fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that, having always a sufficiency in

all things, we may abound in every good work, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory, honour, and power, for ever and ever, Amen.—Glory be to Thee, O Lord! Glory be to Thee, O Holy One! Glory be to Thee, O King! for having rejoiced us with food. Fill us with Thy Holy Spirit, that we may be found well-pleasing in Thy sight, and not ashamed when Thou shalt reward every man according to his works.’<sup>1</sup>

The reader cannot fail to observe the healthy tone which pervades these prayers, and that equally marks the sentiments ascribed to the monks. They are both entirely free from that spirit of saint and image worship which afterwards crept in amongst them. They are, in short, such sentiments and such prayers as any evangelical Christian might use at the present day. Here, as in most other instances, the strongest proofs of the declension of the Greek and Latin Churches may be found in the Church of the Fathers. Our means of information as regards the internal order of this colony are very imperfect. We find Chrysostom speaking of their having a ‘director;’ but beyond that single reference, we are left without any particulars as to the rules by which they were governed. It does not appear that they had yet any common building like a monastery; but there must have been some hall, or large apartment, where they met for devotional purposes during the week.

<sup>1</sup> Hom. on Matt. 68, Matt. 25, 12; Epist. to Tim. 14; Matt. 55. He gives us the following picture of the free life of the desert:—‘There is no dread of magistrates, no worldly arrogance, no terror of slaves, no disturbance of women and children, no multitudes of chests, or laying by of superfluous garments, no gold or silver, no guards and sentinels, no store-house.’ Still he reminds the people that there may be characters quite as saintly in the towns as in the deserts. ‘Let us not,’ he says, ‘despise those that are in the churches. There are many such often among us, though they are hidden ones. Nor let us despise them because they go from house to house [that is, in the way of social intercourse], or appear in the forum, or stand forth in public’ (Epist. to Tim. 14).

We meet with no allusion to congregational gatherings, to public services, or to Sabbath ordinances of any kind. So far as we can discover, the regulations of this community left the members pretty much at liberty to consult their own wishes as to the choice of their abode, company, and manner of living.<sup>1</sup>

Hence some of them resided, either occasionally or regularly, in the town, spending the bulk of their time at the hills; others dwelt alone in caves,<sup>2</sup> or cells, scattered over the neighbourhood, after the fashion of the Eremites; while those who preferred it lived together in companies or communities more or less numerous. As the monks were all of the lay order, that fact may be sufficient to account for the want of public worship among them; although there is reason to believe that meetings of a more private nature, for the exposition of the Scriptures, were kept up by some of the monks. The city not being very far distant, those who might wish it, were probably free to go to any of the churches there. It is not likely, however, that many would care to avail themselves of that privilege; for the ascetics, as a body, were strongly opposed to the clergy, and to those members of the Church who held by them, and were satisfied with their services. They looked upon both the one class and the other as little better than mere formalists; and it was chiefly on that account that they quitted their society, and refused to remain in fellowship with them.

<sup>1</sup> In Egypt the monastic system was much more thoroughly organized at this period. It was not, however, till the fourth century that Pachomius established cloisters, with abbots at their head.

<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom himself lived in a cave before his health broke down. It was this that compelled him to quit the desert at last. In his 17th homily, when speaking of the monks who came to Antioch at the time of the insurrection, he represents them as 'leaving their caves and huts,' in order to hasten to the help of their friends. There is no mention of a common dwelling in any of his allusions to them. See Hom. xvii., on the statues.

Any one who is acquainted with the history of that body of religious professors known in the north by the name of 'The Men,' will be able to understand in some measure the spirit by which the early monks were animated. Like these Scotch separatists, they were generally composed of the most zealous and perhaps the most pious men of the time. Like them, also, they were much given to the reading of the divine word, and to the discussion of difficult questions in theology; but equally, like them, their good qualities were darkened and disfigured by many outstanding faults. This is only what all who know anything of human nature will be prepared to expect. They who, with or without reason, have been brought to esteem themselves wiser and holier than their neighbours, may always be regarded as an exceptional and doubtful class of persons. They are generally men of morbid views and strong passions, labouring either under a most harrowing state of self-consciousness, or living in a perfect Elysium of mystical exaltation and ecstatic self-satisfaction, while they are the victims, very often, of disordered intellects, or at least of diseased imaginations. The stories related of certain of these primitive monks—of their pride, their fanaticism, their sovereign contempt for Christians of the ordinary type; their fierce determination to outstrip each other in the extent of their austerities; their firm belief in their own superhuman piety, and sometimes in their own superhuman power;—such stories alternating with others that tell of the temptations to lust, blasphemy, self-destruction, and other crimes of the most horrible and unnatural kind, by which they were frequently assailed, are quite sufficient to indicate the peculiar idiosyncrasy of this class (whose representatives are to be found in all religious sects), and the special dangers that are connected with the ascetic spirit. These, we admit, are exceptional cases; but we have selected them for the

purpose of pointing out more distinctly the temper of the race, and the tendency of the system.

Still the ascetics, as a body, were much revered by all classes, from the highest to the lowest. This was especially true as respects the hermits or anchorites. Such was the light in which many of them were regarded, that persons of every rank visited their cells in order to receive spiritual counsel from them; while statesmen and courtiers, and even the emperors themselves, travelled great distances for the purpose of consulting them. A single word uttered by their lips was received as a voice from heaven, and had more effect than the most learned and enlightened discourses from any other parties. There were certain individuals among them who were supposed to be in the secrets of the Almighty, and therefore resorted to as the highest interpreters of His will. Of this a very notable illustration occurs in the history of Theodosius, the greatest of all the later emperors, and one who was by no means destitute of Christian light. This may be inferred from the fact that it was through his instrumentality, in a great measure, the Church was purged from the leaven of Arianism. We shall let Gibbon tell the story; for although we dislike the spirit, it is impossible not to admire the graphic strokes, of his narrative. 'When Theodosius was preparing for the conquest of the West, before coming to any decisive resolution the pious Emperor was anxious to discover the will of Heaven; and as the progress of Christianity had silenced the oracles of Delphi and Dodona, he consulted an Egyptian monk, who possessed, in the opinion of the age, the gift of miracles and the knowledge of futurity.<sup>1</sup> Eutropius, one of the favourite eunuchs of the palace of Constantinople, embarked for Alexandria, from whence he sailed up the Nile as far as the city of Lycopolis, or of Wolves,

<sup>1</sup> John's life was written both by Rufinus and Palladius.



in the remote province of Thebais. In the neighbourhood of that city, and on the summit of a lofty mountain, the holy John had constructed with his own hands a humble cell, in which he had dwelt above fifty years, without opening his door, without seeing the face of a woman,\* and without tasting any food prepared by fire or any human art. Five days in the week he spent in prayer and meditation; but on Saturdays and Sundays he regularly opened a small window, and gave audience to the crowd of suppliants who successively flowed from every part of the Christian world. The eunuch of Theodosius approached the window with respectful steps, and proposed his questions concerning the event of the civil war, and soon returned with a favourable oracle, which animated the courage of the Emperor by the assurance of a bloody but infallible victory.<sup>1</sup> In this case the 'oracle' was fulfilled to the letter, and John's reputation of course confirmed.

Examples of the same kind are to be found in the history of the Church at various periods; and several well-authenticated cases of what looks like *prevision* are currently believed, and even circumstantially recorded, as having occurred in the Highlands of Scotland at the present day; the prophets in this instance being not monks, but Presbyterian ministers.<sup>2</sup> It is easy to account for such predictions by resolving them into simple guesses, which come to be occasionally realized; but while repudiating all that is superstitious in connection with them, we think that many of them at least may be ascribed to something more creditable than mere hypocritical imposition or hysterical delusion.

The self-knowledge which is acquired by a long course of solitary introspection is perhaps the best means of

<sup>1</sup> *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, vol. v. p. 79. London 1806.

<sup>2</sup> See *Fathers of Ross-shire*, by the Rev. John Kennedy.

arriving at a comprehensive knowledge of human nature in the mass. He who understands one man thoroughly, understands all men generically ; for we believe, with Solomon, that 'as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' And if, to the knowledge of human nature, there be added a close acquaintance with the word of God and the laws of Providence, we can easily conceive of an individual thus qualified, forming so accurate a judgment of passing events, as to foretell, almost with unerring certainty, what the issues of them are likely to be. In such cases the miraculous element is totally excluded by the fact that the accuracy of the prognostic depends, not on the suspension or violation, but on the normal action, of the natural laws. It is through this twofold knowledge of man's ways and of God's will,

'That old experience doth attain  
To something like prophetic strain.'

But if the monks had some to support, they had many to decry them. The pagans as a body, and not a few of the more enlightened or worldly-minded among the city professors, regarded them with a strong feeling of prejudice and dislike. This is the less to be wondered at, considering the way in which the monks treated both the one class and the other.

The lofty scorn with which they looked down upon the worshippers of wood and stone (for they had not yet got the length of manufacturing such divinities for themselves) was galling in the highest degree ; and the language in which they were accustomed to denounce the city church-goers, whom they represented as being in all essential respects worse than the heathen multitude, was no doubt very provoking. In short, their good and bad qualities alike were the means of combining against them the most influential parties in the State, including a large portion of the clergy, of whom as a class they

were in the habit of speaking anything but respectfully. The truth is, that under a great show of demure, or what the apostle calls 'voluntary,' humility, the ascetics were democrats of the most determined type, both in religion and politics, and therefore not at all disposed to look with much favour on the great, whether connected with Church or State.

It was about this time (A.D. 365) that Valens issued an edict against them, or rather against those who left their homes and families to enter into their ranks. In that edict he speaks of them as a set of disgraceful sluggards,<sup>1</sup> who, under the pretext of religion, but really with the view of indulging their slothful propensities, ran off from the cities and joined the monastic orders. That there was some ground for this allegation is generally allowed; though it was believed, at the same time, that Valens was led to pass the edict in question chiefly because they had made themselves so conspicuous in their opposition to the Arians, whom the Emperor supported against the orthodox party in the Church. On this subject it was that Chrysostom wrote his first work. It consisted of three books, and was a defence of the monastic system, with special reference to the imperial decree, and the condemnation of it therein contained. It was no slight proof of the courageous spirit by which John of Antioch was distinguished, that he ventured to take up the gauntlet which was thrown down by the ruler of the world, and came forward to challenge his statements and to refute his charges.

At this period also there occurred another incident which moved Chrysostom not a little. This was the secession of Theodorus from the community at the desert. What it was that prompted him to take this step we are not informed; but Chrysostom was greatly disappointed at his having done so, and wrote one, if not two, letters

<sup>1</sup> *Sectatores ignaviae.*

to him on the occasion. His act, as he regarded it, was the violation of a vow by which he had bound himself more closely than before to the service of Christ. After discussing that point, he reminds him of the great contrast between the ceaseless cares and excitements of the town, and the religious repose they had enjoyed together at the hills. 'To have the mind distracted by so many objects, to serve so many, to live for so many,' he says, 'but never to be able to live for oneself—is this to live, Theodorus? None of these things, my beloved, are to be found among us, as thou thyself must testify. For thou knowest the joy thou hast tasted in the short period thou didst spend with us. He alone is free who liveth for Christ.'<sup>1</sup> Such is the strain of earnest yet affectionate appeal in which he addresses his friend, on whom he looked as being guilty of a serious 'lapse' in acting as he did. But these remonstrances had no effect in the way of inducing Theodorus to change his mind; nor had his conduct in quitting the society of the monks any injurious influence on his personal character or usefulness. For we find that he afterwards became bishop of Mopsuestia, and rose, as we have already noticed, to be the most distinguished advocate and representative of the school of Antioch.

But while we cannot help sympathizing with Chrysostom under the double blow we have just mentioned, viz. the departure of his friend from the desert, and also the denunciation of the monastic system by the rulers of the State, we must say, at the same time, that we question altogether the soundness of the basis on which that system proceeds. Apart from the spirit of separatism and dissent in which it originated, it seems to us, as a question of principle, to be quite incapable of defence. In the elaborate treatise to which we have referred, Chrysostom does not attempt to go to the root

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Theodorum Lapsum*, ii.

of the question. He deals rather with parties than with principles, and seems more anxious to remove prejudices than to insist on the divine authority of Monachism. Hence the first book is addressed chiefly to the pagans ; the second, to the hostile party among the Christians ; and the object of the last is to bring out the superior piety and usefulness of the monks, and the great spiritual influence they had consequently acquired. In the circumstances, this was perhaps the best line of defence that the writer could have taken. But speaking of the monastic system as a system, we do not see how it can be justified either on rational or scriptural grounds.

We can all understand the yearning after solitude and retirement by which some individuals, and these often the purest and tenderest of their kind, are sometimes haunted like a passion. We can understand, for example, the state of mind that led the morbid poet of Olney to cry out :

‘O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
Where rumour of oppression and deceit  
Might never reach me more !’

We can understand still more clearly, perhaps, what Goldsmith means when describing the man

‘Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since ’tis hard to combat, learns to fly.’

To ‘fly’ for a time, however,—to ‘lodge in the wilderness’ for a season,—is a thing which might occasionally be good for all, and to which no one would think of objecting ; but the idea of people flying in hundreds, in thousands, ay, in hundreds of thousands, from their houses, duties, friends, fellow-creatures, leaving others to do their work and supply their place, is something rather serious. And as to the parties thus withdrawing from the necessary toils and cares of the world, not for a period, long or short, but *for life*, it seems to us that

their conduct cannot be regarded as anything less (be the motive what it may) than an extravagant, we would even call it a *monstrous*, stretch of thoughtlessness and *self-indulgence*. 'If there are refuges for the health of the body,' says M. de Chateaubriand, 'ah, permit religion to have such also for the health of the soul, which is still more subject to sickness, and the infirmities of which are so much more sad, so much more tedious and difficult to cure.' But then the patients who are admitted into our hospitals never think of going there, if they have the means of being cured at home; and those who are obliged to go for lack of such means, seldom contemplate the prospect of remaining there all their days. On the contrary, they hope to get out as soon as possible; and whenever they are sufficiently recovered to do so, they generally seek to return to their homes and families. Hence the parallel, however pathetically expressed, does not hold. The only refuges for 'the health of the soul' in which the patients are sometimes immured for life, are our asylums for the insane.

'The idea is poetical and touching,' observes M. de Montalembert, referring to this statement of Chateaubriand's, 'but it is *not true*. Monasteries were never intended to collect the invalids of the world. It was not the sick souls, but, on the contrary, the most vigorous and healthful which the human race has ever produced, who presented themselves in crowds to fill them. The religious life, far from being the refuge of the feeble, was, on the contrary, the *arena of the strong*.'<sup>1</sup> Here we find these two *chevaliers* of the Latin Church, these noble and eloquent Bretons, taking opposite ground on this question. If we may venture to arbitrate between them, we would say that there is something 'poetical' at least in M. de Chateaubriand's idea, but M. de Montalembert's argument carries its own refutation in its front; for

<sup>1</sup> *Monks of the West*, vol. i. p. 25.

strong men are intended to *use their strength*, and have no right to waste it in weaving their baskets and counting their beads.

But the last of these writers proceeds to defend monasticism on *Scripture* grounds, though not, we think, with very much success. He finds a precedent for it in the example of the ancient prophets, and cites in particular the cases of Samuel, Elijah, and John the Baptist. The first of these, both as judge and high priest, was a very active and a very *public* man, living anything but the life of a recluse. The example of Elijah and John the Baptist, both having the same ministry and the same 'spirit,' is expressly spoken of in Scripture as being of an exceptional character. It is quite clear that the prophets as a body did not sequester themselves from the world any more than the priests; nor did they act on the principle of celibacy, or any of the other rules peculiar to the monastic system. The Rechabites are also referred to; but the practice of 'abiding in tents' and leading a simple pastoral life was always more or less common among certain tribes in the East. It was the patriarchal custom, and the patriarchs were not solitaires, but great cattle-traders or shepherd-kings. The only thing remarkable in the case of the Rechabites (and even that was not peculiar to them) lay in their observance of the Nazarite vow. But although they abstained from the use of wine, there is nothing to show that in other respects they followed any ascetic regimen.

Then, passing on to the New Testament, M. de Montalembert quotes the words which our Lord addressed to the young ruler about going and 'selling all that he had,' as if these words implied that he was to withdraw from the active duties to which he, in common with all the other disciples of Christ, was called. He further reminds us of the promise of 'a hundredfold' held out to those who gave up 'houses, or lands, or

relations, for the sake of the gospel.' And he finally refers to the account given in the Acts of the Apostles of the primitive believers 'having all things in common.' Now, that the followers of Christ were called upon to renounce 'the world' is undeniable; but is not this the duty of *all men*, and not merely of monks? There is not a child to whom the sacrament of baptism is administered, but is laid, either personally or by sponsors, under a solemn vow to do so. Hence there is nothing in these texts that can be held to give any sanction to the principle of monasticism, as distinguished from the common law and order of the Christian life.<sup>1</sup> But there is one thing that stands out distinct and clear on the face of the New Testament Scriptures, viz. that our Lord and His apostles were not monks in any sense of the term. The asceticism of the Baptist, in so far as it differed from the freer and more genial example of his Master, was to that extent not a merit, but a defect—not the symptom of a higher, but a lower life.<sup>2</sup> In short, we have no hesitation in saying that the monastic theory, so far from finding any support in the theology either of the Old Testament or the New, is diametrically opposed to the fundamental principles of both. It is,

<sup>1</sup> *Monks of the West*, pp. 90–95.

<sup>2</sup> One of the fundamental grounds on which the monastic system was set up was founded on the *physical* theory of sin,—a theory which pervaded nearly all the philosophical schools and religions of the East. It was supposed that moral evil arose from, and was mainly promoted by, the appetites of the body. Hence one of the chief means of purification adopted was the mortifying of the flesh by fasting, flagellations, and other austerities of that kind. Celibacy was a part of the same system, and was also in principle of pagan origin. The Essenes and Therapeutæ of Judea, the Buddhists of India, the Gnostics, Manicheans, and Montanists of the early Church, were all monastic sects, were deeply tinged with the Gentile theology, and held in various forms the physical theory of moral evil to which we have adverted. This is the complement of the sacerdotal principle, which assumes that *grace* comes through the body by sacramental applications. The apostle understood this heathen theory well, when he warned his converts against those who taught abstinence from 'meats' and from 'marriage.'



we maintain, directly at variance with the second table of the law, and with the whole tenor of the gospel ; as it is impossible to fulfil the precepts of the one, or to carry out the practical requirements of the other, consistently with the principle of artificial seclusion on which this system is based. The field of duty is not the cell or the cloister, but 'the world ;' and the state of mind which leads a man to concentrate his spiritual cares upon *himself*, which makes his own soul and his own safety the first and last object of his concern, is a state of mind that savours far more of the selfishness of nature than of the generous impulses of grace. We are required to 'love our neighbour *as ourselves* ;' but how can it be said, or supposed, that we are animated by any such feeling, when we make it a rule to *shun* the society of our fellow-men—to shut ourselves up from holding any intercourse with them that can possibly be avoided ; when we tell them, with all the emphasis that bolts and bars, iron gratings, and massive stone walls can give to our meaning, that we do not trust them, that we are afraid of being morally contaminated by coming in contact with them, and that they are therefore to 'stand back from those who are holier than they ?' Is that the spirit of Christian brotherhood ? Is it the charity that thinketh no evil ? Is it, in a word, the Christianity of Him who came down from heaven to visit us, who 'took flesh and dwelt among us,' and who, knowing that He was watched by the sneering Sadducee on the one hand, and by the sanctimonious Pharisee on the other, mingled so freely with the poor and the outcast, that He was stigmatized as 'the friend of publicans and sinners ?'

#### IV.

##### THE STUDENT OF THE WILDERNESS.

*'In silence mighty things are wrought,  
Silently builded thought on thought,  
Truth's temple greets the sky ;  
And, like a citadel with towers,  
The soul, with her subservient powers,  
Is strengthened silently.*

*Soundless as chariots on the snow,  
The saplings of the forest grow  
To trees of mighty girth :  
Each nightly star in silence burns,  
And every day in silence turns  
The axle of the earth.'*

ANON.

THE benefit which Chrysostom derived from his sojourn in the desert may be inferred from the kind of training which he there received, as well as from the rich fruit which it afterwards produced. Removed from the distractions of Antioch, he had abundant leisure for study ; and, having had his mind imbued with the love of classic literature in the school of Libanius, we may suppose that some portion of his time would be devoted to the revision of his academical course. It is evident, both from the style of his writings and from the peculiar character of his rhetoric, that he did not lay down the lessons of the gymnasium when he retired to the solitude of the wilderness. Such tastes once formed, are seldom lost ; and although the rising force of Christian sentiment and the gradual increase of Christian light would tend to sober down any undue admiration he might have cherished for the poets and philosophers of

Greece, yet he could never have ceased to prize the exquisite beauty of their productions. Had he been left entirely to the society of the monks, it is not unlikely that he might have fallen away, to some extent at least, from the tone of his early culture. But it was not so. He was, as already mentioned, surrounded by a number of young men of his own age and station, whose company no doubt helped him to maintain those intellectual and social accomplishments which they possessed in common, and which are in no way inconsistent with the spirit of religious devotion.

But while the student of the desert did not quite forget the things that were behind, he pressed on to those that were before, keeping his eye intently fixed on what he now perceived to be the prize of his high calling. The great subject of his thoughts and studies, during his six years' seclusion in the desert, was the Word of Life. This precious record he searched and pondered, part by part, with devout thoughtfulness, accompanied by earnest breathings for the aid of that divine Revealer whose office it is to 'guide unto all truth.' In order to impress what he read more fully on his mind, he committed to memory large portions of the inspired text. He also, as part of his cloistral work, transcribed with his own hand many of the sacred books; and by these means it was that he acquired such a remarkable command of the language and sentiments of the Bible. As the result of this training, he became, like Apollon of Alexandria, not only 'an eloquent man,' but 'mighty in the Scriptures.' Nor is there any one thing that gives the Christian teacher so much power over the minds of his hearers as the ability to use *rightly* the plain statements of the record. The conscience, or moral sense, is the prime faculty that must be addressed in order to get anything like a firm hold of a man, so as to move him on towards God. The understanding

may be convinced, the imagination may be excited, the feelings may be touched ; but unless the preacher gets beyond these intellectual and emotional effects, and awakens the deeper echoes of the conscience, his admiring auditor, or it may be weeping penitent, will soon shake off his influence, and slip out of his grasp. Now there is nothing that is fitted to arouse the great religious faculty, nothing that seizes upon it with such sure and resistless force, as the naked declarations of the word, when aptly introduced and skilfully employed. Herein lay the difference between the preaching of Paul and that of the local rhetoricians of Corinth, who charmed the Christian assemblies of that place with their refined but strained and artificial eloquence. The apostle made no attempt to address them in that style, although it is plain that he had the ability to do so if he pleased ; but instead of aiming merely to gratify the taste of his hearers, he sought 'by the manifestation of *the truth* to commend himself to every man's *conscience*, as in the sight of God.' In order to accomplish this, he tells us that he used 'great plainness of speech ;' selecting 'not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.' Hence, though not reckoned by any means so eloquent as some of his rivals, though it was even averred by certain of the more fastidious that his 'speech was rude and his appearance contemptible,' yet his discourses sank more deeply into the hearts of the people, and produced a far mightier effect, than the orations of those who trusted to the mere 'wisdom of words.' Now Chrysostom, with a tinge of the rhetoric of which the Corinthians boasted, possessed, besides, something of the same kind of power which marked the preaching of Paul. That power he drew from the same source as the apostle did, namely, from the divine word ; and it was

during his residence with the monks that he laid in those treasures of truth with which his memory was so richly stored, and which contributed so largely to the success of his ministry.

Among the rest of the young men whom he met at the mountain was one Theodorus, with whom he became particularly intimate. They were fellow-pupils under Libanius. Theodorus was by many years younger than Chrysostom ; but this early tie would be sufficient to bring them more closely together, especially in such a place as that in which they were now living. As they were both preparing for the work of the ministry, it appears that they were in the habit, during the latter part of their stay with the monks, of attending a theological class taught by Diodorus, an eminent presbyter of Antioch, who afterwards became bishop in St. Paul's native town of Tarsus in Cilicia. This Diodorus was supplying the place of Chrysostom's early friend Meletius, who had been deprived of his bishopric and banished from the place by the Emperor Constantine, because of his opposition to the Arian doctrine, which Constantine favoured. Whether it was the Emperor's doing or not, no episcopal successor was appointed ; but Diodorus took charge of the shepherdless flock, ministering to them without fee or reward, and supporting himself meanwhile by teaching a gymnasium, along with another person of the name Carterius.<sup>1</sup> Besides this, he began a kind of Bible class, with the view of training young men in the principles of sacred exegesis ; and this class it was that Chrysostom and Theodorus attended. To the zealous and disinterested spirit we have just noticed, their teacher added intellectual gifts of a superior order ; so that he became one of the

<sup>1</sup> This is distinctly asserted both by Socrates and Sozomen, though Neander questions the accuracy of the statement, without (as it appears to us) sufficient ground.

chief founders of a distinct theological school, thereafter well known as 'the school of Antioch.'<sup>1</sup> Its chief distinction lay not so much in its tenets as in its mode of interpreting the Scriptures, which was opposed to the mystical or allegorical method adopted by the earlier Fathers, and recommended by the high authority of Origen.<sup>2</sup> This method being founded on quite a false theory, Diodorus set himself strenuously against it, and was among the first who introduced those sounder canons of interpretation which are now almost universally accepted. His views were taken up by Chrysostom and Theodorus, to both of whom they were of vital service. Instead of looking at the word of God as a mine of occult meanings or a mass of spiritual conundrums, they were taught to regard it as a simple and unsophisticated communication of the divine mind; containing mysteries, indeed, transcending the reasoning powers of the highest, but still intended to be understood, so far as its general sense is concerned, by the plainest and the humblest.

That this is the true theory is now acknowledged by all our best critics; but it was not so then. On the contrary, it was considered a sort of desecration of the Scriptures to suppose that they were level to the comprehension of the vulgar, or that their real meaning could be made out by ordinary readers. It was held that none but those who were trained in the traditions and interpretations of the Church were capable of discovering the mysteries that lay hid beneath the veil or verbal cover of

<sup>1</sup> The first originator of this school was Eustathius Bishop of Antioch, and predecessor of Meletius. It was from him most probably Diodorus took up the principle, which he and his two pupils (Chrysostom and Theodorus) carried out more fully and systematically. Along with these, Eusebius Bishop of Emira is reckoned one of the chief promoters of this system.

<sup>2</sup> The Antiochian school was also distinguished by certain views as to 'the doctrine of faith,' the precise nature of which we have not been able to discover.

the text. This notion, however, was connected, but very slightly, if at all, with the principle which has since been taken up by the Church of Rome as to the exclusive right of the priesthood to expound the doctrines of the faith, and the other principle which has sprung out of that, viz. the necessity of a supreme and infallible interpreter. The error into which the early Fathers fell had no distinct relation to any sacerdotal theory of this kind, but arose partly from the profound reverence with which they regarded the sacred writings, and partly also, if not very mainly, from the use which the pagans made of these writings in their controversies with the Christians. We can easily imagine how little qualified the uncircumcised heathens were to judge fairly of the facts and statements of Scripture, and how naturally the Christian apologists would not only have questioned *their* capacity to understand them, but have also insisted on there being an esoteric meaning in them (as there was, indeed, in their own oracles), which unbelievers and untrained persons generally were not in a condition to comprehend. Looking at the matter from this point of view, we can at once perceive the way in which the early Fathers and their followers were led to adopt the mystical or allegorical mode of interpretation to which we have referred, and the abuse of which Diodorus laboured to restrain and correct.

It is quite clear that the leading men of the fourth century did not hold that the members of the Church were incapable of deriving any benefit from the reading of the Scriptures, and that they ought not therefore to be trusted with the free use of them. Indeed, if there was any duty which the teachers of that day pressed upon their hearers more frequently and more emphatically than another, it was the duty of searching the Scriptures. Chrysostom, both at Antioch and Constantinople, was in the habit of giving out his text

some time before he preached, that the people might think over it; and he often stopped short when he came to the chief difficulty of a passage, with the view of leading them to study the subject in private, and try to solve it for themselves ere he took it up again. In one of his homilies he addressed his audience thus: 'I have said this, my brethren, in order that you may observe how anxious I am that you should pray both for me and yourselves, that the Lord would grant that I may speak worthy of the subject, and that you may be capable of receiving it in a right manner. Until the question is solved, *examine it yourselves*; ask others, and say, "This question our bishop hath proposed to us to-day, and, if the Lord grant, he will also explain it."'<sup>1</sup> On another occasion, speaking of the excuses by which some attempted to justify their neglect of this duty, he represents one as saying, 'I am a man of business, I am no monk; I have a wife and children to provide for.' Such language he declares to be exceedingly reprehensible, and maintains, on the contrary, that just those persons who were exposed to the hardships of the world, and most liable to be assailed by its temptations, stood most in need of such safeguards as the Scriptures furnish.<sup>2</sup> He often exhorts his hearers not to rest satisfied with what they heard read from the Scriptures in the church, but to *read them also with their families at home*; for what food was to the body, such the Holy Scriptures were to the soul—the source whence it derived substantial strength.<sup>3</sup> One of the chief hindrances to the reading of the Scriptures arose from the want of education among the bulk of the people, and also from the cost of manuscript copies of the sacred books. Referring to this, Chrysostom says on another occasion: 'As many of the poorer class are

<sup>1</sup> Homily on Lazarus.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. iii. Same subject.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. xxix. in Genes. sec. 2.



always making the excuse that they have no Bibles, I would like to ask them, Can poverty, however great it may be, hinder a man from buying the tools of his trade? What then? Is it not singular that in such a case he never thinks of blaming his poverty, but does his best that it may not hinder him; while, on the other hand, in a case where he is to be so great a gainer, we find him complaining of his poverty?'<sup>1</sup>

Augustine is, if possible, more urgent on this subject than Chrysostom himself. 'Do not allow yourselves,' he says to the people of Hippo, 'to be so immersed in present earthly things as to be obliged to say, "I have no time to read or to hear God's word."'<sup>2</sup> Among the distinguishing marks of a zealous Christian, whom he describes under Solomon's figure of the ant, he mentions this as one: 'He goes to church and listens to God's word; he returns home, finds a Bible there, opens and reads it.'<sup>3</sup> For earnest inquirers, who were anxious to study the Bible in a careful and systematic way, rooms furnished with manuscript copies were provided in the galleries of the church, to which they could retire on week-days or during the intervals of public worship, for the purpose of reading and meditation. We may also refer in a sentence to the views of Jerome on this point. Alluding to a Roman lady of the name of Læta, he says that 'she taught her daughter from her childhood to cultivate a love for the sacred Scriptures, instead of jewellery and silks.'<sup>4</sup> We have noticed in a former chapter the care with which the holy women of that age, such as Nonna, Monica, Emmelia, and Anthusa, trained their children in the knowledge of those *divinos codices* of which Jerome speaks. Without referring, however, to other writers in addition to these primary authorities,

<sup>1</sup> Hom. xi. in Johan. sec. 1.

<sup>2</sup> In Psalm lxvi. sec. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, sec. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 47, sec. 12. *Pro gemmis et serico, divinos codices amet.*

it is enough to say, that the *practice* of appointing public readers of the Scriptures proves that the Fathers held very different views from those which are now maintained by their self-styled successors, whose sentiments on this subject are as much opposed to the known customs of the early Church, as to the express commands of the apostles and their Master. In other words, their sentiments are discredited *both by Scripture and tradition*, and therefore indefensible on every ground, human and divine.

From what we have said concerning Diodorus and the theological class which he opened in the old town of Antioch, it will be seen that Chrysostom was wisely directed when he placed himself under the tuition of this pious and sagacious presbyter. He was by this time about twenty-six years of age, while Theodorus, his friend and fellow-student, was little more than twenty. The latter was induced to join the Monastic Society at 'the desert' (as it was called), so that they had the advantage of each other's company and conversation both in the wilderness and in the city. It is probable that the class-meetings were held not more than once a week, and that Diodorus taught these advanced youths rather in the way of direction than of minute supervision. They were both distinguished classical scholars, and the younger of the two was still under the spell of Homer and of Plato, of Virgil and of Livy,—a spell which still asserted its influence, though in a more subdued form, over the mind of his companion. We can easily picture to ourselves the pleasant walks they must have had together between the hills and the classroom in the old town. We can fancy them starting up from their straw pallets on which they enjoyed such rest as the Emperor in his state-bed might envy. After breaking their fast, and joining in the matin services of the monks, we may follow them as, with the morning

breeze fresh in their faces, they descended the mountain, while its bare ~~sides~~ were yet moist with the dew, and its barren ridges bathed in the ruddy glow of sunrise; marking, as they moved downwards, the mists clearing away from the fields and vineyards below, and gradually revealing to their view the ancient walls and towers of Antioch. Then, after calling on some of their friends, and gathering up quietly the news of the town, they crossed the river, and found their way through narrow lanes, and dwellings of unknown antiquity, to the dingy schoolroom, and the able, though unofficial, professor on whose instructions they attended. Their lessons over, and their tasks appointed for the next meeting, they might be seen passing through the suburbs on their journey homewards, talking by the way of the fresh views which Diodorus had opened up to them, of the exegetical rules which he laid before them, and of the new light which he threw on those passages of the Greek Testament which had engaged their attention. Amid conversation on these and other kindred topics, Chrysostom and his friend would reascend the mountains as the evening shadows were coming down upon them, or the rising moon was beginning to silver the rippling waters of the Orontes below them, and to shed a softening light on the rude cells and primitive huts to which they were approaching.

Before dismissing this subject, we may state here more distinctly, what we mentioned before, that there were as yet no public institutions set up by the Church for the training of theological students. Besides the assistance given by the monks (generally rude and imperfect) to those who took up their residence among them, there were no other means provided beyond the private instructions that city bishops and presbyters, like Miletius and Diodorus, were found willing to give to young men in whom they took an interest. The only

theological school which existed before this period was that of Alexandria, a place which ~~had~~ long been famous for its libraries and its men of learning, and where the earliest translation of the Hebrew Scriptures—known as the Septuagint—was executed under the royal patronage of that intellectual race the Ptolemies. The next school of theology that rose after the Egyptian was the Antiochian school, which was mainly, if not primarily, founded by the distinguished presbyter of whom we have been speaking. This institution was afterwards brought into still greater prominence and repute under Theodorus, who, along with Chrysostom, was among the first disciples that came to it, and both of whose names shed a lustre over it, which, more perhaps than anything else, helped to raise it to the eminence it attained among the theological seminaries of the East.

## V.

### THE GATE OF THE EAST.

*'Talents are nurtured best in solitude,  
But character on life's tempestuous sea.'*—GOETHE.

THE time was now drawing nigh, though he evidently knew it not, when Chrysostom was to be summoned from his cell in the desert to take a part in the active service of the Church. 'The field,' says the Master, 'is the world;' and into that field he was about to go down, there to sow the precious seed he had been storing up for so many years of his life. From his studious and naturally retiring disposition, he had become greatly attached to the simple ways and solitary habits of the monks. Brought up in comparative luxury from his earliest years, he never seems to have felt the want of those comforts he had enjoyed under his mother's roof, or of those domestic attentions and gentle ministrations to which he was there accustomed. He lived so much within himself, his moral nature had obtained so complete an ascendancy over his corporeal appetites, that he might have said, or sung, with our English Chaucer:

*'My mynde to me a kingdome is,  
Such pleasante joys therein I fynde,  
That it excells all other blisse,  
That earth affordes, or grows by Kynde.'*

In him was realized to a very marked extent what our great dramatist speaks of as one of the characteristic attributes of 'mind,' especially when purged and purified by the discipline of self-denial:

'The mind has no horizon ;  
It looks beyond the eye, and seeks for mind  
In all it sees, or *all it sees d'erruling.*'

But in the case of Chrysostom, we have reason to believe that his intellectual tendencies were not only confirmed, but carried up to a still higher point, by the influences of a still higher life. He walked by faith. He looked not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are *not* seen. Beneath the penetrating force of that 'look,' the intense power of that solar glance, substances are at once resolved into their essences : the diamond turns into charcoal ; and 'the fashion of the world'—the mere external glare and glory of it—'passes away.'

It was about this time that Chrysostom came back from the desert to Antioch. The cause of his return was a severe illness, occasioned by the excessive austerities he had practised. During the two previous years he lived by himself in a cave, exposed to all the discomforts inseparable from such a place, and calculated to prove more injurious to him than to men less delicately nurtured. The mental qualities he possessed were such as are usually connected with a finely-strung nervous system ; and for such a man, the damp atmosphere of a cave and the spare diet of an anchorite were evidently unsuitable. Ascetic experiments, which would have been mere child's play to John of Lycopolis, were very serious things for John of Antioch. He was therefore compelled to abandon his place of retreat, and take up his abode again in the city of his birth.

That city, so interesting to him as the scene of his early associations, was called 'The Gate of the East' before the seat of the imperial government was removed to Constantinople. Even in the fourth century it had declined but little from its ancient splendour ; and though the city of Constantine had by this time become the residence of the court, the metropolis of Syria still

retained much of its historical importance, and was, along with Rome and Alexandria, one of the three great capitals of the Roman Empire. It stood on the banks of the Orontes, just below the point at which that river emerges from between the dark mountain ranges of Lebanon and Taurus. These ranges came so near, that Silpius, one of their projecting spurs, abutted upon the city from the south. At the mouth of the Orontes, about thirty miles below Antioch, stood the great seaport of Seleucia, by which it had immediate access to the waters of the Mediterranean and the commerce of the West ; while through the passes of Lebanon it was in direct communication with the main caravan routes of the East, from Jerusalem and Damascus to Alexandria, Babylon, and Nineveh.

The city itself was built on a piece of level ground, and formed nearly a complete square, the river flowing through the midst of it, and dividing the old town from the new, just as London and Paris are divided by the Thames and the Seine. To give the reader some idea of its size, as well as of its main architectural features, it may be stated that one of its streets was four miles in length, rising from the rugged base of Silpius, and stretching in a long line of handsome colonnades from the eastern to the western suburb. Like all those ancient cities, it was surrounded by walls and battlements, and adorned with a number of royal palaces, government offices, temples, and other public buildings. Of its ornamental monuments, the most remarkable, or at least the most characteristic, was an allegorical statue, which was intended to represent the genius of the city. This consisted of a crowned female, throned on a rock, the right elbow resting on her knee, and holding in her hand a bunch of wheat-ears fully ripe, with the rippling waters of the Orontes running at her feet, one of which rested on the shoulder of a man emerging from the tide.

The grand feature of Antioch, however, was a sort of sacred grove, called Daphne, which lay at a distance of four or five miles to the south-west of the city. It occupied a piece of high ground, shaded with groves, refreshed with the play of fountains, and adorned with sylvan temples dedicated to Apollo and Diana. The scene was celebrated far and wide for its wonderful beauty, as well as for the beastly orgies carried on within it by the sensual followers of heathenism. It was a sort of paradise, fitted up for the joint service of the flesh and the devil. What a contrast between the intellectual and the moral characteristics of that wonderful Greek race! Only one of their own self-divining symbols can fitly express it—the head of a god combined with the extremities of a satyr.

This race, it may be observed, formed the basis of the population, the city having been originally founded by the Macedonian family of the Seleucidæ, who colonized it with their own vassals, whose numbers were afterwards increased by an importation of Hellenistic Jews. The latter, forming the next most important element in the social mass, were encouraged to settle here by Seleucus Nicanor, who granted them the rights of free citizens, and placed them on a footing of equality with the original inhabitants. This was a privilege accorded them nowhere else; and hence, out of Judea, Antioch contained a larger body of Hebrews than any other city in the world. It was on this account the gospel found its way so rapidly to that place, from whence it spread through all the regions of the East. It was here that the first Gentile Church of any importance was founded. We find that even in the days of the apostles it became to a great extent the headquarters of the Gentile missions, being even more than the Holy City itself the chief centre from which they were conducted. It was to Antioch that the first deputation was sent from the



mother Church at Jerusalem, in the person of Barnabas, himself a Cretan, and therefore of Greek birth. And it was from Antioch that the reference came which led to the assembling of the first council at Jerusalem. The very cause of that reference was a proof of the number of 'Grecians' that had joined the Christian party, the object of it being to ascertain whether the Gentiles were to be subjected to those Levitical usages which the Jewish disciples were still anxious to retain. It was at Antioch also that the followers of Christ were so far distinguished from the main body of the synagogue-worshippers with whom they were for the most part originally connected, as to be called 'Christians' after the name of their true Leader.

They who in contempt fastened this epithet upon the followers of the Nazarene who was crucified, little thought that it would be perpetuated as a name of glory and honour among the foremost nations of the world until time shall be no more; that the greatest kings should rejoice to bear it, as the title beyond all others to them precious; that associations the most hallowed should gather around it; that it should acquire fresh lustre from age to age, and become the bond and boast of millions, and millions more, when the Roman Empire had passed away—when the groves of Daphne were cut down, its temples deserted, and Ichabod inscribed upon its walls, because the glory of the false was departed, and the glory of the new religion had become an abiding power upon the earth. The world, which gave the rising Church its fresh baptism of blood and fire, gave it also this new name, which was never known before. And what a testimony that is for the Church, that she has been able to convert a word of reproach and contempt into a word which that world now owns as expressing 'the highest style of man!'

It will therefore be observed that this city was linked

by many interesting traditions with the early fortunes of the Christian Church. In Chrysostom's time the population amounted to about 200,000. Of these more than the half were professedly Christian, the rest being pagans of various creeds, or of no creed at all. Cicero speaks of it as distinguished by men of learning and high cultivation in the arts; and Pliny informs us that it was one of the free cities of the empire, having received from Pompey the privilege of being governed by its own laws. Owing, however, to the softness of the climate, and the mixed Oriental races of which the society of the place was composed, Antioch was conspicuous for its vices and its vanities above all the cities of the East. After Syria fell under the power of the empire, it received new and important additions to its population, in the government officials who came to reside there. 'Many are the allusions to Antioch in the history of these times, as a place of singular pleasure and enjoyment. Here and there an elevating thought is associated with its name; but for the most part, its population was a worthless rabble of Greeks and Orientals. The frivolous amusements of the theatre were the occupation of their life. Their passion for races, and the ridiculous party quarrels connected with them, were the patterns of those which afterwards became the disgrace of Byzantium. The Oriental element of superstition and imposture was not less active. The Chaldean astrologers found their most credulous disciples at Antioch. Jewish impostors, sufficiently common throughout the East, found their best opportunities here. It is probable that no populations have ever been more abandoned than those of Oriental Greek cities under the Roman Empire, and of these Antioch was the greatest and the worst.'<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, was Chrysostom's birth-place; such the

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. c. iv.

social influences by which his youth was surrounded, and such also the first scene of his public ministry. Looking at the matter from this point, we may see at once how important to his future usefulness was his withdrawal from the tainted atmosphere of Antioch during that critical period when his religious character was forming, and how prophetic and providential the instinct which drew him to the desert, and kept him there, till the foundations of his spiritual life were too solidly established to be easily shaken. Like Elijah from the mountains of Gilead, like John the Baptist from the wilderness of Judea, he now appeared in the midst of his friends and fellow-citizens with a new light in his eye, and a great purpose in his heart; purged from the infection of early habits, and from the influence of local associations, and having his moral as well as his physical habits braced by the free air of the hills, and by the long course of ascetic discipline through which he had there passed. Possessed naturally of a strong sense of right, which had been quickened and intensified by the pure light of the gospel, we have no doubt that the corruptions of the great city would stand out before his view in all their naked hideousness. He would be able to look *at* them, and *through* them, now, with the eyes of a stranger; such eyes as Paul brought to bear on nearly the same sight, when, accompanied by Barnabas, he walked up by the banks of the Orontes from the harbour of Seleucia, and made his first entry into the gay, bustling, pleasure-loving, and chariot-sounding metropolis of Syria.<sup>1</sup> Like the spiritual hero

<sup>1</sup> A little farther up the river Asy (the Orontes of the ancients), and thirty miles from Alexandretta, is Antakia, the Antioch of the Scriptures, where the Christians first received the name of their Lord and Master, and from whence the apostle of the Gentiles first set out on his missionary expeditions. It is now a small dilapidated place, with scarcely any ruins even to mark its former splendour; and though it contained a population of upwards of a quarter of a million in its palmy days, it now hardly numbers eight

of Tarsus—the founder of the very Church which he was called to serve—Chrysostom combined the brightest zeal with the bravest spirit: hence those exhibitions of voluptuous gaiety and vulgar profligacy which smote upon his senses as he wandered through the streets of his native town, however they might ‘vex his righteous soul from day to day,’ affected his mind with no feeling of despair. He was strong in faith, and had learned to add to his faith courage. To show that this is no fancy-picture, but a true interpretation of his mind and character, we need only quote one of his sayings after he had entered upon his work. When urging his hearers to do their best for the purpose of arresting the tide of iniquity that was roaring like a flood through all the avenues of the city, he said, ‘One man, inspired with holy zeal, is sufficient to amend an entire people.’ And when he saw the multitude running to the public games, and forsaking the house of God, he declared that such things would not discourage him, or lead him to relax his efforts for the public good: ‘For,’ says he, ‘it is the

thousand souls, of which one hundred and fifty families are Christians of the different Oriental sects. But alas! the place which was once called the ‘Eye of the Christian Churches,’ where the apostles met, where the golden-mouthed Chrysostom preached, and where the name Christians was first adopted by the followers of Jesus, contains no edifice for public worship, and the Christians are obliged to meet in a cave east of the town for the performance of their devotions. The scenery on the banks of the Orontes hereabouts is pleasing: gardens of mulberry and fig trees meet the gaze, and tall slender poplars throw their shadows on the murmuring stream beneath, where the natives oft resort in summer. In 1098 the Crusaders captured Antioch, but surrendered it in 1263 to Bibars, Sultan of Egypt. An additional interest invests Antioch, from the tradition that it was the birth-place of St. Luke the Evangelist, and that St. Paul was baptized in the Orontes, a little way out of the city; and to this day the gate leading to Aleppo is called by the natives *Bab Boolus*, the gate of St. Paul, in honour of that event. Poor as Antioch now is, it is nevertheless held in great repute in Christendom, and three prelates (although none of them, I believe, reside here) claim the title of ‘Patriarch of Antioch,’ viz. the Patriarch of the Greek Church, of the Syrian Monophysites, and of the Maronites.—*Syria and the Syrians*, by Gregory M. Wortabet.

firm purpose of my soul, as long as I breathe, to perform this service ; and whether I am listened to or not, to do that which the Lord has commanded me.' Remembering the state of dejection and moral dislocation under which he left Antioch, and contrasting it with the spirit which he now brought back to it, one is reminded of the noble lines of Beaumont and Fletcher :

' As a pine  
Rent from Cæta's top by sweeping tempests,  
Jointed again, and made a mast, defies  
Those angry winds that split him ; so will I,  
Pieced to my never-failing strength,  
Steer through these swelling dangers,  
Plough their prides up, and bear like thunder  
Through their loudest storming.'

It was in the capacity of public reader that Chrysostom had acted before his departure to the desert ; and now, as soon as he was well enough to undertake any work, he was advanced to the office of the deaconship by his old friend Meletius, who advised, and succeeded in persuading, him to consecrate his talents to the service of the Church. On this office he was the more readily induced to enter, because the responsibilities it involved were rather of a practical than of a *spiritual* kind. He had already, while living among the monks, been pressed to accept of a bishopric in a remote province, when only six-and-twenty, and therefore four years short of the legal age. His friend Basilus was offered a similar appointment, apparently by the same parties, or at least at the same period. Chrysostom seems to have hesitated for a time ; but when the matter came to a point he drew back, feeling himself unfit, as he said, for the duties of such an office. Basilus, who was to have been ordained along with him, was much disappointed, and complained of his leading him on, and then deserting him at the eleventh hour.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He, however, satisfied Basilus that his scruples were conscientious, not capricious ; and it was this incident that suggested his work on the priesthood.

But the office of the deaconship was of a different and much less formidable nature. It was connected with 'the outward business of the house of God,' and therefore not, strictly speaking, of a clerical character, nor such as involved the necessary discharge of clerical duties.<sup>1</sup> Being of a studious habit, and having no sufficient scope for his mental activity in his present sphere of action, he sought and found employment for his private hours in the composition of works on religious subjects. Besides his books in defence of Monachism, and his letters to Theodorus, Stagirus, and others, he wrote, while still at the mountain, a memoir of Babylas, one of the martyrs of Antioch. In order to turn his leisure time to account, and to gratify his taste for literary occupation, he composed at this period his two *Treatises on Contrition*, and his work on *The Priesthood*.

That our readers may understand Chrysostom's position at this juncture, it is necessary to explain that there was a considerable party in Antioch, composed chiefly of ascetics, who were strongly opposed to Meletius. As he was thought to have owed his election to Arian influence, and was certainly ordained by Arian bishops, they questioned both the soundness of his views and the validity of his orders.<sup>2</sup> Finding, however, that the great majority

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 1-4. The fact of *women*, who were not 'suffered to teach' or to 'speak in the church,' being appointed to this office, proves that it was not one of the clerical orders. The cases of Stephen and Philip are not in point, as they appear to have been called (by the necessities of the Church) almost immediately to the higher grade or office of 'Evangelists.'

<sup>2</sup> Meletius was a native of Melitene in Admenia, where he was appointed to his first charge as bishop of Sebaste. Succeeding Eustatius, who had been deposed for heresy, and being himself suspected of a leaning towards Arianism, he found the congregation so distracted by controversies and divisions that he soon resigned it, and retired to Beroe in Syria. It was while he was residing here that he was elected to Antioch in A.D. 360. He was banished by the Emperor Constantius for abandoning and opposing the Arian party, but recalled after that emperor's death. He and Gregory of Nazianzen were intimate friends, and it was by Meletius that Gregory was installed at Constantinople, as we shall afterwards see.

of the people were in his favour, they withdrew from his congregation, and chose another pastor of the name of Paulinus. This occasioned a schism which continued throughout the whole lifetime of Meletius. At his death, in A.D. 381, it was proposed, with the view of healing the breach, that no successor should be appointed, and that Paulinus should be allowed to remain as the single bishop of the place. Being an old man, it was hoped that on his decease his congregation and that of Meletius might be again reunited under the care of some pastor acceptable to both. This was felt to be eminently desirable, because of the bitter jealousies and unseemly contentions which prevailed among them, and by which the whole city was kept in a state of disturbance. The Council of Constantinople was sitting at the time, and it seems that, on the motion of Gregory of Nazianzen, an arrangement of the kind just indicated was proposed, and understood to be accepted by both parties.

The pride of the Meletians, however, led them to break through this understanding. Being members of the chief or 'High' church of the city,<sup>1</sup> they could not brook the idea of submitting to the authority of Paulinus, or of listening to his prelections. Looking at the party by whom he had been chosen, it is likely that his teaching was rather of a grim and ungracious type, and therefore not much to the taste of the more cultivated classes in Antioch. They consequently resolved to choose a bishop of their own, and fixed upon Flavian, a man of good social position, and of respectable if not very remarkable attainments. By him Chrysostom was immediately raised to the rank of presbyter, and associated with himself in the ministerial work of the congregation. Then it was that the man of 'the golden mouth' was elevated to his true place; for then, to use John Knox's phrase, was his 'mouth first opened to preach the evangel.'

<sup>1</sup> It was called, by way of distinction, the 'Old Church of Antioch.'

An opportunity was at length afforded him of pouring forth those 'golden' words that had for so many years been pressing for utterance, but for which no sufficient outlet had been yet obtained. The sluices were now about to be opened, and the pent-up waters soon broke loose with all the force and fulness of a tidal current.

The son of Anthusa was no stranger to the Christian people of the place, much less to the members of that congregation. For more than a year he had gone in and out among them in the quiet discharge of his humble duties as deacon; and of those who marked the sickly pallor of his countenance, the monastic thoughtfulness of his look, the shy, studious, and devotional habits of his life, there were probably but few who had anything like an adequate conception of the brilliant gifts that lay hid beneath the calm surface of that gentle and lovable character. Little, however, as they might have dreamt of this, they all knew that he was a man of fine accomplishments, and of no common parts. We may therefore suppose that his accession to the office of presbyter, and to the rank of a public teacher, could not fail to awaken some degree of interest in their minds; all the more, because of the bitter jealousies existing between themselves and the congregation of Paulinus. By their refusing to amalgamate with that congregation, or to acknowledge the authority of their pastor, the spirit of contention had broken out with fresh violence at this crisis. It was therefore of some consequence to them that their new bishop and his assistant presbyter should be able at least to hold their own against the influence of the opposite faction, who, it seems, had gained the sympathy of the neighbouring clergy, and of nearly all 'the serious people' of the place.

These various circumstances combined to lend additional interest to Chrysostom's first appearance as a



preacher in the principal congregation of Antioch.<sup>1</sup> The church was crowded to excess. Men of all ranks and parties, Christian and pagan, were present. Libanius, with some of his heathen friends and fellow-rhetoricians, were grouped together in a retired corner of the house ; and it was whispered that Eutropius the eunuch, and the confidential adviser of Theodosius, was sitting behind the curtains in the imperial gallery. The preacher appeared, a thin, sickly-looking man, who walked in with a languid step and absorbed air, and took his seat in the Reader's desk. He was, as one of our best ecclesiastical historians describes him, 'of low stature ; his head big, but bold ; his brow large, and lined with wrinkles. His eyes were sunk deep inwards, but withal quick and amiable ; his cheeks lank and hollow ; his beard short and thin.'<sup>2</sup>

The devotional exercises being concluded, he opened the manuscript Bible that lay in the desk before him, from which he read out his text, and began his exposition in the calm, measured, deliberate style of speech for which he was afterwards famed. The tones of his voice, rich and sonorous, were laden with meaning, and betrayed in their tremulous falls 'the motion of a hidden fire.' This, along with that metallic distinctness of utterance which always marks out the natural orator, and which conveys the force not only of every sentence, but almost of every syllable, arrested at once the attention of the audience. As he advanced from exposition to illustration, from scriptural principles to practical appeals, his delivery became gradually more rapid, his countenance more animated, his voice more vivid and intense. The people began to hold in their breath. The joints of their loins were loosening. A creeping sensation, like that produced by a series of electric waves, passed over them.

<sup>1</sup> Though he had previously spoken at some of the district meetings and distant baptisteries, it was more in the way of simple exhorting than of regular preaching.

<sup>2</sup> Cave.

They felt as if drawn forward towards the pulpit by a sort of magnetic influence. Some of those who were sitting rose from their seats;<sup>1</sup> others were overcome with a kind of faintness, as if the preacher's mental force were sucking the life out of their bodies; and by the time the discourse came to an end, the great mass of that spell-bound audience could only hold down their heads, and give vent to their emotion in tears. For a while at first, they looked at each other with glances of wondering delight, and clapped their hands in ecstasy;<sup>2</sup> but the speaker, as if rather interrupted than gratified by these tokens of their admiration, rushed on and bore down their attempts at applause; and long before he was done, admiration gave way to such intense emotion, that they were no longer able to express their feelings in the customary form. In fact, the speaker was lost in the splendour and power of his speech. His hearers were past thinking of him, by the very force with which he turned their thoughts in upon themselves, and on the vital and almost visible truths with which he seized, filled, and mastered their minds. His person vanished, as it were, into a voice; and from the utter stillness that prevailed, it was like 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness,' and answered only by the sighing winds of the waste. Dryden's description of a similar voice will convey a better idea of it, and of the effect produced by it, than any words of ours.<sup>3</sup> It was

'Now roaring like the ocean, when the winds  
Fight with the waves; now, in a still small tone,  
The dying accents fell, as wrecking ships  
After they dreadful sink, murmuring down,  
Into the gurgling depths.'

---

<sup>1</sup> The audience generally stood, and the preacher often addressed them sitting; but Chrysostom, as he rose in his fervour, also rose to his feet.

<sup>2</sup> It was the custom at this time to applaud the preachers in this way.

<sup>3</sup> We must warn the reader that the above description is a composite one, drawn from several accounts of Chrysostom's preaching on different occasions.

## VI.

### THE OLD CHURCH OF ANTIOCH.

*'Tis vain or busy thought hath here no part ;  
Bring not thy plots, thy plough, thy pleasure hither :  
Christ purged His temple, so must thou thy heart.  
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together  
To cozen thee : look to thy actions well,  
For Churches are our heaven or our hell.'*

HERBERT.

ALTHOUGH Chrysostom's homilies are so full of details concerning everything which came within the scope of his ministry, we can find no allusions in them to the place wherein they were delivered, nor have we met with any account of it elsewhere. All we know about it is, that it was called the 'old,' and sometimes 'the apostolical,' Church of Antioch. Whether it had any local or traditional connection with the place set apart for Christian worship in the days of the apostles, we have no means of ascertaining. But it appears that, besides the name by which it was associated with them, it stood in 'the old town, near the river Orontes,'<sup>1</sup> and therefore in a remote suburban part of the city. Bearing in mind that it was the principal or cathedral church of the place in Chrysostom's time, there must have been some strong reason for continuing to meet there, instead of erecting another edifice in a more central and conspicuous position. If it was not the same building which had been used by the apostolic founders of the Church, it

<sup>1</sup> Preface, or superscription, to the first homily on the statues, where it is stated that these homilies were delivered *in τῇ παλαιᾷ ἐκκλησίᾳ*.

very probably contained a portion of the same materials, and stood not far from the same site. Considering the successive storms of persecution that swept throughout all parts of the Roman Empire during the latter half of the first and nearly the whole of the second century, it is not likely that buildings of any note had been erected for Christian worship till after that period. Indeed, we find that the Christians were actually denounced as atheists,<sup>1</sup> because they had no altars, no temples, no sacrifices, and no public religious services of any kind. They met in private houses, and celebrated the rites of their worship at night, or before break of day;<sup>2</sup> while their ministers were for the most part simple and unlettered men, with nothing either in their dress or manners to distinguish them from the general body of their hearers. But as the rage of persecution abated, and the number of the Christians increased, church buildings began to make their appearance; and in the third century Tertullian tells us that they were sufficiently prominent in many places to attract the notice of the heathen.<sup>3</sup>

There is some reason to believe that the old church of Antioch was one of the earliest, and therefore one of the most 'apostolical' places of worship, either in the East or West. Hence we may conclude that it was one of the plainest structures then to be found; for, from the latter half of the third century, the Christians began to vie with their heathen neighbours in the stateliness of their temples, as well as in the artistic and symbolic style of their worship. The churches erected at this period were divided into three separate compartments—the *Pronaos*, *Naos*, and *Adytum*. These divisions corresponded also with those of the Jewish temple, by which

<sup>1</sup> Athenagoras, sec. 3, 10; and Minucius Felix, c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> In Antioch we find that this early practice was maintained in the fourth century.

<sup>3</sup> *Advers. Valent.* c. 3.

they were, if not suggested, at least supposed to be authorized. The Pronaos, or outer court, was assigned to the unbaptized, including heathens, Jews, and catechumens; the inner court, or nave, was appropriated to the lay members of the congregation; the sanctuary, which was fenced off from the rest of the interior, in some cases by a veil, in others by a railing, being reserved for the clergy. Within this enclosure was the altar, the bishop's chair or 'throne,' with seats for the presbyters ranged in a semicircle around it.

There were as yet no images of any kind allowed either without or within the churches. It took another century before that piece of paganism had obtained a footing in the Christian sanctuary. The way, however, was so far prepared for it, inasmuch as Constantine and his sons had decorated some of the public monuments they had set up with pictures of Bible subjects, such as Daniel in the Lions' Den, and Jesus as the Good Shepherd.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius the historian informs us that Constantine's sister, the widow of Licinius, had requested him to send her an image of Christ, at which the good man was greatly scandalized. 'What, may I ask,' says he in reply, 'do you understand by an image of Christ? You can surely mean nothing else but a representation of the earthly form of a servant, which for man's sake He for a short time assumed. Even when in this His divine majesty beamed forth at His transfiguration, His disciples were unable to bear the sight of such glory. . . . You must have forgotten those passages in the Old Testament which forbid us to make any image of that which is in heaven above or on the earth beneath. Where have you ever seen any such in the church, or

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *de V. C.* iii. 49. It appears that some of the religious women of that age had pictures of this kind embroidered on their dresses, and attracted attention to their devout 'habits' as they walked along the streets. See *Austerius de divite et Lazaro*.

heard of their being there from others? Have not such things been banished far from the churches over the world?'<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, speaking of such images, says: 'We must not cling to the sensuous, but rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the divine; and to pretend to worship a spiritual essence through earthly matter, is to degrade that essence to the world of sense.'<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom was evidently of the same opinion. Hence he says to those who wished to see an image of Christ: 'Teach the soul to form a mouth like the mouth of Christ, for she can form such a one if she will. And how is this to be done? By what colours? By what materials? By no colours, no materials; but only by virtue, meekness, and humility. How many are there among us who wish to see His form? Behold, we can not only see Him, but be like Him, if we are really in earnest.' From what has just been stated, it will be seen that a feeling in favour of such images was beginning to spread through the Church at this period; but the Council of Elvira<sup>3</sup> pronounced against the movement, and checked it for a time.

And while the old meeting-house of Antioch was without graven images or pictorial embellishments of any kind, it would appear that the public services conducted within it were at the same time comparatively simple. There was no instrumental music. Chry-

<sup>1</sup> Only a fragment of this letter remains. It is to be found among the transactions of the Council of Iconoclasts, held at Constantinople A.D. 754.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromat.* v. p. 559.

<sup>3</sup> Held about A.D. 305, canon 36. Dupin, the Roman Catholic historian, says: 'The Fathers of this Council did not approve of the use of images, no more than that of wax candles in full day-light.'—*History of Ecclesiastical Writers, Fourth Century*. Our Anglican friends are in the habit of referring to the 'Church primitive and Catholic.' We wish they would tell us when she became so, and also when she ceased to be so; we could then better comprehend their standpoint, which is at present extremely unintelligible.

sostom affirms that the sackbuts, psalteries, and trumpets used in Solomon's temple were 'permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their hearts. God condescended to their weakness, because they had but lately been drawn off from idols. But now, instead of instruments, we may use our own organs to praise Him.'<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr gives us the following account of the manner in which the Christians of his time carried on their public services:—'On the day which is called Sunday [by the heathen, that is], there is a meeting together in one place of all [Christians] who dwell either in towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as the time permits. When the reading is over, the president [or chairman of the council of presbyters] delivers a discourse, in which he makes an application, and exhorts to the practice of these good things. We then rise all together and pray.'<sup>2</sup> When prayer is ended bread is brought, with wine and water ; and the president in like manner offers up prayers and

<sup>1</sup> In Psalm cxlvi. See also Bingham, vol. i. p. 383, and ii. p. 485, edit. 1840. The music was led by choirs, and there are complaints of their introducing theatrical tunes and a theatrical style of singing into the churches. It was the Hebrew Psalter that was in common use. Paul of Samosata tried to introduce a set of Arian hymns, and was censured by the Council of Antioch (held A.D. 269) for so doing.

<sup>2</sup> The practice of standing in prayer has come down from the apostolic times to our own, in all the purer branches of the Church, and is in itself very significant. The early Christian writers comment upon it, and explain its *symbolical meaning*. Justin Martyr, for example, says : 'It is by this means we are put in mind of our fall by sin, and our resurrection, or restitution, by the grace of Christ. That for six days we pray upon our knees is a token of our fall by sin ; but that on the Lord's day we do not bow the knee does symbolically represent our resurrection, by which, through the grace of Christ, we are delivered from our sins and the powers of death.' It may be added that the practice in question was maintained with so much rigour, that when some began to neglect it, or to innovate upon it, the Council of Nice took notice of it, and ordained that there should be constant uniformity in the churches, and that on the Lord's day men should stand when they made their prayers to God.

thanksgivings *according to his ability*,<sup>1</sup> and the people express their assent by saying "Amen." This description of the people 'rising' to prayer, and the president offering up prayers 'according to his ability,' is confirmed by Tertullian, Origen, Minucius Felix, and others of the earlier Fathers. The first of these represents the Christians of his time as 'looking up' while they prayed, 'with hands spread open,' and '*without a prompter*, because from the heart.'<sup>2</sup> Liturgies were used in the heathen temples, and these, with the mystic utterances, the symbolic robes, the postures, the gestures, the incantations and processions of the priests, formed an effective part of the ritualistic display of which they boasted.<sup>3</sup> But for the first three centuries at least there were no common books of prayer or devotional formularies used by the Christians, certainly not as a general and fixed rule. In proof of this, it may be stated that during the Diocletian persecutions, when copies of the Scriptures and church utensils were seized wherever they could be found, no books of that kind were in any case discovered.<sup>4</sup> Even in Chrysostom's time, the only form of prayer which is particularly mentioned is the Lord's Prayer, the use of which was restricted to the baptized members of the Church. Hence it was known as 'the prayer of the faithful.'<sup>5</sup>

One of the most conspicuous features in the services of the early Church consisted in the reading of the Scriptures. This, as we have seen, was considered so im-

<sup>1</sup> ἕκτ' δυνάμει, *Apol.* ii. p. 98. See Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 1. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.* c. 30: 'Sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus.'

<sup>3</sup> A boast kept up to this day by those who rejoice in what they call 'the full pomp of Catholic worship.'

<sup>4</sup> This fact is admitted by Bingham, iv. 187.

<sup>5</sup> That other forms were used by this time seems evident; but whether they embraced the whole service, or only certain parts of it, as we think, cannot be distinctly ascertained. To speak of the 'Liturgy of Antioch' as if it were like that of Rome or England, is to convey a false impression of the case.



portant, that a special officer, under the name of public reader, was chosen for the purpose of attending to it. The effect of such a practice in promoting the religious instruction of the people was yet further enhanced by the expository style of preaching which prevailed in these primitive times.

It was not till the fourth century that the custom of selecting texts or particular passages became common ; and Chrysostom was among the first who adopted it. In order, however, to give the people the full benefit of this system, without depriving them of the advantages of the earlier mode, the textual was still combined with the expository method, embracing entire books of Scripture, which were explained in a series of successive discourses in the simplest or homiletic form.

As to the seasons of public worship, it appears that the Jewish Sabbath continued to be observed down to the fourth century along with the Sunday, or first day of the week. In many places (such as Antioch itself) they held religious services on Friday also, in commemoration of our Lord's passion.<sup>1</sup> 'In several of the Eastern churches,' says Neander, 'the Sabbath was celebrated nearly after the same manner as Sunday. Church assemblies were held, sermons delivered, and the communion dispensed.'<sup>2</sup> The Sunday, or, as we prefer to call it, the 'Lord's day,' was consecrated in a special manner to religious exercises. Here the Emperor Constantine interposed by a State enactment, requiring that all suits should be stayed, the courts of justice closed, and military exercises suspended on that day. In 386 these enactments were re-affirmed, and more rigidly enforced, by the Theodosian code. Civil transactions of every kind were strictly forbidden on the

<sup>1</sup> It appears that this practice was also followed at Alexandria, Milan, and Constantinople.

<sup>2</sup> *General History*, vol. iii. 401.

Lord's day ; and whoever transgressed was to be held as guilty of sacrilege.<sup>1</sup>

Before passing away from this subject, we must refer to a practice to which we have already alluded, and which was peculiar to the Churches of the East : we mean that of applauding the preacher in the public assemblies. It appears that this very unseemly custom was imported from the heathen schools rather [than from the heathen temples. In the latter the priesthood had not much to say that was either suited to the capacities of the people, or calculated to promote their edification. They had, in short, no gospel or good news to publish, and hence preaching did not come within the range of their duties. They confined themselves, accordingly, to symbolical and sacrificial rites ; deeming that what they had to do was not to communicate instruction, but to impress the minds of the people with reverence for the gods. They indeed professed to have certain mysteries in their keeping, which could not be imparted to the vulgar, and were only revealed to the initiated. They acted on the principle, that the less the people knew of their secrets, they would think the more of their wisdom. In this they were probably quite right ; and the lesson has not been lost on their successors in the priesthood. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* is one of the standing traditions of the order.

But yet it would be incorrect to say that the pagans had no teaching of any kind, for the Sophists taught morals and philosophy in their schools. It is true that these schools were not attended by the common people, but by the children of the wealthier classes ; so that there were really no means of instruction provided for the former, either in their public temples or educational gymnasiums. The Sophists, being teachers of rhetoric,

<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Theodos.* tit. viii. l. 3. In 425 the exhibition of public games or spectacles on Sunday was forbidden by law.

naturally attached great importance to their own special art, and were therefore in the habit of giving specimens of their oratorical skill by declaiming in public. On these occasions the amount of applause they received marked the estimation in which their abilities were held ; and hence they had recourse to every artifice by which effect could be produced, and such proofs of approbation elicited.

It appears that some of the clergy had become infected with this spirit, so that the practice followed in the theatres and schools of the rhetoricians was transferred to the churches. Chrysostom, as the most eloquent preacher of his time, was constantly interrupted by such marks of sympathy and approval. He, however, so far from countenancing the custom, invariably condemned it, and used every means to induce the people to desist from it, as we shall afterwards see.

The preacher of Antioch had enough to do. It seems that the work of public instruction was, if not wholly, at least to a large extent, committed to him. This, in a city of between two and three hundred thousand inhabitants, the majority of whom were nominally Christian, must have involved no ordinary amount of labour. The church in which he ministered was the chief or metropolitan charge, and it appears to have been the only place of worship at which the immense multitude who looked to Flavian as their bishop were in the habit of assembling. The other two congregations were composed of parties who had separated from the main body on sectarian or heretical grounds, and we may therefore infer that the number connected with them was comparatively unimportant. Hence, along with the bishop or principal overseer, who was often absent, and always much burdened with other duties, Chrysostom had in a manner to provide for the spiritual sustenance of the whole Christian population. In many of the larger cities,

says the venerable historian to whom we have already referred, such as Rome and Alexandria, it had been found necessary to establish small parochial churches, over each of which a presbyter was appointed pastor ; and these lesser communities were dependent upon the mother church, which was under the immediate care of the bishop. But at Antioch we find no trace of such a regulation ; nor can we discover in the discourses of Chrysostom any mention of an arrangement similar to that which existed in other cities, where it was the custom for individual presbyters, each belonging to the mother church, to perform divine service successively in the smaller and dependent churches. From the sermons of Chrysostom, it appears that at one hour of the day the bishop, at another a presbyter, preached ; and this was the only provision made for the vast congregation of Christians at Antioch. Chrysostom therefore did not preach to any particular flock, nor had he a separate cure of souls : he assisted the bishop throughout the diocese. But as the power of teaching and the gift of eloquence were not conferred upon all presbyters, to those who failed in these respects were entrusted the administration of the sacraments and the care of the poor, while the duty of preaching was assigned to those who possessed in an eminent degree the requisite qualifications. This charge was doubtless confided to Chrysostom in preference to all other presbyters. He often preached twice in the week, probably on Sunday, and on the Sabbath (Saturday), which was in many Eastern churches appointed for the assembling of the congregation. He occasionally preached at break of day, an hour which was perhaps chosen on account of the great heat. Flavian appears to have acknowledged and availed himself of the superior attainments of Chrysostom. On one occasion, after the bishop in a few preliminary words addressed his congregation on a particular subject, which

in the polemics of that day frequently came under discussion, he permitted him to come forward and answer the objections of the heretics, which the congregation desired to hear refuted by Chrysostom. At another time, in the early morning, when Chrysostom had preached a sermon to the catechumens in one of the distant baptisteries, and had afterwards arrived at the mother church oppressed by fatigue, and expecting to hear a sermon from the bishop, the latter desired to become the auditor of Chrysostom, whom he called upon to preach instead of himself, that the wishes of the congregation, who were filled with anxiety to hear him, might be gratified.

The eloquence of Chrysostom soon excited general admiration throughout the city, and attracted men of all classes to the church. The listeners thronged around the pulpit, eager to catch every word that he uttered. At times, when he preached at greater length than he intended, and towards the end of his sermon feared to have wearied the audience, the tokens of applause, becoming louder at every moment, gave him clearly to understand that it was their wish still longer to receive his instruction. And in that age, when men were more accustomed to hear the word expounded by their preachers than to study it in manuscript, a teacher of such amazing eloquence as Chrysostom—who testified by his own holy life, that the doctrines which he delivered with so much power and feeling to others had a sanctifying and blessed influence upon himself—was capable of producing effects which, as St. Jerome says, were wont to reveal themselves in a zealous performance of all good works.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of St. Chrysostom*, by Augustus Neander, pp. 110-11, Stapleton's translation.

## VII.

### THE RELIGION OF THE GOLD RING.

'When once thy foot enters the church, beware,  
God is more there than thou; for thou art there  
Only by His permission. Then beware;  
And make thyself all reverence and fear:  
Kneeling ne'er spoil silk stocking.  
Quit thy state:  
All equal are within the church's gate.'

HERBERT.

THE great 'Teacher sent from God' came expressly to be the pastor of the poor. As He rose from them, and lived amongst them, so it was to them in particular that He laid open the lessons of His kingdom. These lessons related to the 'common salvation,' and were therefore first unfolded to the 'common people.' Our Lord Himself tells us that His ministry was specially designed for them; that He was 'anointed,' or ordained, 'to preach the gospel to the poor;'<sup>1</sup> or, in other words, that He came to look after the sheep who had no shepherd. He accordingly cites this circumstance as the crowning proof of His divine mission—greater even than the greatest of His miracles.<sup>2</sup>

It was the first time in the history of the world that this class was so honoured. Up to that period the priests and philosophers of all nations not only regarded them as unworthy of their notice, but also as incapable of comprehending the mysteries which they professed to teach. Theirs were mysteries of magic, or of 'science falsely so

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22.

called ;' consisting chiefly of dark sayings and darker sorceries, drawn from the ancient traditions of the world. *His*, on the contrary, were mysteries of grace, the knowledge of which depended not so much on the intellectual as on the moral condition of those to whom they were unfolded ; and therefore mysteries which might be 'hid from the wise and prudent,' and yet 'revealed unto babes.'<sup>1</sup>

Hence there was this grand difference between Him and all the teachers who went before Him, especially those of the heathen world, that the 'wisdom' which He came to communicate was adapted both to the mental and social condition of the poor ; whereas the wisdom which they dealt in could only be acquired by persons of some culture, which, of course, implied the possession of some influence and wealth ; and to that class, accordingly, they confined their attentions.

Jesus therefore was, after the Hebrew prophets at least, the first Teacher of the neglected multitude—the great Missionary of the masses—the Heaven-ordained Apostle of the poor. Nor were the objects of His compassion insensible to the interest which He took in their welfare. As He had selected them to be the chief disciples of His school, and the chosen depositaries of His doctrine, so we are informed that they followed Him eagerly, and 'heard Him gladly.' Unwarped by artificial training, or by class prejudices of any kind, they felt—what all *now* feel—that He 'spake as never man spake,' and taught with a degree of weight and power that was nothing less than divine. Comparing His simple but heart-stirring and soul-searching utterances with such occasional expositions as they might have

<sup>1</sup> 'How can we fail to admit,' says Isaac Taylor, 'that the gospel is "from heaven," when we see that it turns away from the illustrious to the ignoble ; from the rich to the poor ; from the wise to the ignorant ; in a word, from the few to the many ?'

heard from the priests and rabbis of the temple, they said, as they looked one to another, 'This man speaketh with *authority*, and not as the scribes.' That remark expresses the solemn and self-evidencing light with which His words were accompanied, and which made His instructions differ so widely from the rabbinical subtleties and sapless commentaries of the scribes. They therefore hailed Him as a 'teacher come from God.'

From this opinion, however, the better educated classes of their countrymen totally dissented. Twisted and perverted by the false schooling they had received, they despised those very things with which the common people were delighted. They scoffed at the homely but heavenly wisdom that moved *their* hearts and mended their lives. The chief priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herodians—in short, the whole of the influential and professional classes, with a few signal exceptions—were quite of one mind on the subject, and looked down on the doctrines and disciples of Jesus with unmitigated contempt. 'The light that was in them was darkness,' and they were therefore in a worse condition than those who had no light at all. Yet little did they reckon of this. These night-seeing owls kept each other in countenance, while they were supported at the same time by all the hangers-on of the temple and the palace. The client-seeking lawyer, the family physician, the cattle-dealer that sold oxen for the sacrifices, the money-changer who had set up his stall in the 'holy fair,' the trader wanting to get into 'good society;' even the tallow-chandler and the poulterer, who supplied the priests with oil and the poor with pigeons, would join with the phylacteried sect, and with their philosophical rivals, in laughing to scorn the Prophet of Nazareth, and the whole tribe of publicans and sinners, and other 'low people,' who followed Him about, and thought so much of His wisdom.



Well, that day is past, and we know now which was right and which was wrong. The result may teach us a lesson of humility. It shows that, so far as the discovery of spiritual truth is concerned, false training is worse than no training at all.

It is Montaigne, we think, who says that 'all other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not honesty.' In the parable of the sower the same idea is brought out ; for there we are told that even the seed of the word will only bring forth good fruit when it is sown in 'an honest and *good* heart.' The rich, as a class, are naturally no doubt, and may be really, quite as 'good' and as 'honest' as the poor ; but they are not, as a rule, so simple-hearted or so single-minded. To use a common saying, they have 'too many strings to their bow : ' in other words, they have too many extraneous motives to lead them astray ; while it cannot be denied that they are more subject to the bondage of fashion and opinion than those who move in the humbler ranks of life. He who knew well the precise motives by which they were led to reject the gospel, refers to this as one of the strongest of all : 'How can ye believe, which receive *honour one of another*, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only ? ' Hence in the formation of their religious opinions they are apt to be swayed by social and political influences far more than by considerations that are purely religious.

In proof of this, we find that the men who adhered most persistently to the cause of heathenism throughout the Roman Empire were the Roman aristocracy. Even in the fourth century, the great bulk of them still clung to the principles of paganism. This may be ascribed in some measure to the effect of their early training. The most of them, as we have seen, were educated in the schools of the Sophists, who almost to a man continued to adhere to the heathen philosophers, as against the

Christian divines. Their natural prejudices, along with the formal and pedantic habits usually, though not always, associated with their professional pursuits, may help to account for this fact. Of course they would do their best to imbue their scholars with their own opinions; and the more they saw the Christian leaven spreading through the empire, the more would the spirit of rivalry and bigotry be aroused both among themselves and their pupils, until at last it became a matter of pride and social distinction to stick to the old religion, and to stand out against the new.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly 'the wise' (*sophoi*, the Sophists), 'the mighty, and the noble' combined together against the advancement of Christianity in the days of Chrysostom, as they did in the days of Jesus and of Paul. And this antagonism, not of class interests merely, but (what goes far deeper) of mind and conscience, between the aristocracy and the great mass of the population, was one of the chief causes, if not, as we think, the most powerful of all, that led to the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' Such social divergences as these are infinitely dangerous, and ought therefore to be restrained and discouraged by all wise rulers, even for the sake of those

'Whose folly pleads the privilege of wealth.'<sup>2</sup>

The patricians of the empire, those who filled the chief offices in the civil and military services, and were at the head of society in all the principal towns, being thus attached to the pagan interest, we may easily imagine the kind of influence they exerted on the rest of the community with their heathen views and heathen vices. On the lower classes its effect was not so immediate or so influential, because of the distance at which they stood from these magnates; and hence the great

<sup>1</sup> Like some who adhere to Romanism, hoping their profession of the 'ancient faith' will be accepted as a proof that they are of their 'ancient' lineage.

<sup>2</sup> Horace.

bulk of the Christian party consisted, as at first, of 'the common people.' Uninfluenced by the pride of consistency or the prejudices of party, they felt that there was something divine in the gospel of Christ, and especially in Christ's own character. He who was 'meek and lowly in heart,' was just the Saviour that suited them, despised and trodden down as they were by the Gentile princes who ruled over them, and the great ones who exercised authority upon them. It was a mighty thing for them to hear of a celestial Prince who was the Son of the Highest, and who yet loved the poor, and lived among them, and made companions of them, and spent all His life in instructing them, and at last died to redeem them. Yes, to redeem *the poor*, for none but those who are sensible of their poverty will ever share in 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' This was something that their heathen rulers might shoot out their tongues at and laugh to scorn, but it was just the kind of gospel or good news that met their case, raised them out of 'the horrible pit and the miry clay' of moral and social degradation, and brought hope and comfort to their hearts. The God of the Christians was not a big, brutal, imperial Jove, with a cruel frown in his face, and crushing thunderbolts in his hand. He was not that; but, on the contrary, a gentle, thoughtful, brotherly man. Ay,

'The best of men

That e'er wore earth about him ; . . .

A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit ;

The first true gentleman that ever breathed.' <sup>1</sup>

All this and more they felt, though they might not be able in many cases to give articulate expression to their feeling. But it was otherwise with the classes immediately above them, more particularly with that which we at this day have come to distinguish as 'the upper middle class.'

<sup>1</sup> Dekker.

Christianity had by various means, and after a hard struggle, penetrated from the lower to the higher strata of Roman life. Like a subterranean fire, it gradually forced its way up through the hard crust of pride, ignorance, and worldliness by which it was so long pressed down, forming rents and openings for itself here and there over the general surface of society. Many of these clefts, no doubt, very soon closed, leaving nothing but burnt-out scoriæ and ashes behind them. Others gave some slight proofs, if only in the shape of smoke, that the primary cause of the convulsion was not entirely extinct; while some, again, on the highest level of all, on the topmost peaks of the mountains, burned with a bright flame that lighted up the whole horizon. At a very early period there were 'saints in Cæsar's household;' and at the time of which we speak there were not a few saintly characters among the chief officers of State, and even among the members of the imperial family, including Theodosius himself, who, with all his faults, was a true Christian.

It was mainly, therefore, among those belonging to the intermediate ranks—ambitious plebeians, needy scions of noble houses, struggling aspirants after wealth and fashion, and social distinction in general—it was among them that the largest proportion of worthless professors was to be found. They were the parties who came in contact with the pagan aristocracy in the large cities, and who sought to curry favour with these government officials, as a great many of them were. Hence they made their Christianity wait upon their interests, keeping only enough of it about them to 'swear by,' or to please their wives and daughters. Some of them, besides, had pretensions to taste and learning, and therefore wished to stand well with the philosophers, and to show that they were (what we call) 'liberal in their views,' and superior to vulgar prejudices. And thus between 'blown

ambition,' and sycophantic servility, and that kind of upstart pride which Pope calls 'the never-failing vice of fools,' a great number of this class were in the days of Chrysostom found to be rotten to the core, so that Christianity was left to be supported by the best of the nobles and the bulk of the commons. That is to say, it was chiefly upheld by those who were either too high or too low to be much affected by the fierce conflicts and desperate rivalries, personal and political, which raged through all the cities of the empire in 'the latter days' of the Roman world. The apostle's prophetic description of the general character of the people in those 'perilous times,' applies emphatically to the class above mentioned : 'They were lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, . . . incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that were good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.'

The greatest friends and followers of Chrysostom were his Master's old friends, 'the common people' of Antioch. The crowds that filled the church from Sabbath to Sabbath were composed mainly of them ; and it may be stated here once for all, that, from the beginning to the end of his public career, they stuck to him and stood by him with the most leal-hearted fidelity. It was a noble testimony to him, and to the spirit of his ministry ; the surest proof that he was no class-preacher, but one who aimed his instructions at the general heart of humanity. Had he been a man of inferior gifts, it might have been said that he was not up to the mark of the better classes. But the case was quite otherwise. It was known that he was one of the most accomplished men of his time, and that as a speaker and scriptural expositor he stood without a rival. This was felt and admitted even by those who seemed to care least for his instructions, and who preferred the Sunday games and amusements of

the circus to the sacred duties of the sanctuary. At festivals such as Easter, Christmas, and Palm Sunday, when the forms of the Church required that all who made any profession of Christianity should come to the house of God, these gay Antiochians were of course present. And we can well believe that none could be more devout than they were on these occasions ; for it is a curious fact, that persons who have no real religion have often an immense amount of veneration for sacred things, especially for sacred *forms*. Indeed, it may be set down as a rule, that the most unspiritual worshippers are generally the most superstitious. Hence it not seldom happens, that mere formalists seem more earnest when engaged in their devotions than those who realize more clearly the mysteries of faith. An Italian brigand, or an Irish assassin fresh from one of his midnight murders, would put to shame the most straitlaced puritan in the land, so far as humble confessions and penitential prostrations go.

Here is a sample of the complaints against this class of his hearers with which Chrysostom's homilies abound. In one of these, delivered on the festival of Christ's baptism, which was one of the principal holidays of the Greek Church, he says : ' To-day you are all filled with joy, and I alone am sad. For when I survey this Christian assembly, which may be compared to the great ocean, and contemplate the infinite resources of the Church, and then consider that the festival will no sooner have passed away than this multitude will vanish, I am sorely grieved that the Church, which hath begotten so many children, cannot rejoice in them at every celebration of divine service, but only on a festival. How great would be the spiritual exultation, how great the glory rendered to God, how great the benefit conferred on souls, could we behold at every performance of divine service the church and its enclosures thus crowded !

Masters and pilots, when they traverse the deep, use their utmost endeavours to reach a haven ; but we keep tossing on the open sea, overwhelmed by the billows of earthly cares, haunting the forum and the tribunals, but coming hither SCARCE ONCE OR TWICE IN THE YEAR.' The following extract from another homily will show how these holiday professors usually spent their Sabbaths :— ' On Sunday last the whole city was collected here ; the porches were crowded, and the multitude resembled the ebbing and flowing of the sea. But to me your stillness is more grateful than the noise of that great multitude ; your calmness I value more than that tumultuous concourse. We had then to number bodies, now to number souls, all of which are filled with piety. Were we to weigh in opposite scales this small gathering, composed chiefly of the poor, and that crowd of which the rich formed the greater part, the balance would be in our favour. The theatre invites you daily ; no one hesitates to obey the call ; no one pleads the number of his business engagements : all hasten thither as if they had no other care. The old man is not kept back by his grey hairs ; the young man is not afraid to tempt his passions, so easily inflamed ; the rich man thinks it no disgrace to his station. But if there be a question of his going to church, he deliberates as if he were called upon to descend from his high position, and he acts as if (in coming) he had *conferred a favour upon God*. Where now are those who were a burden to us on that day (Easter Sunday) ? for their presence was a burden ! What affairs detain them ? But it is not their affairs— *it is their pride*. And what can be more irrational ? Think ye thus to confer a favour upon us, when ye come hither to hear these things which are necessary to the salvation of your souls ?'

It is scarcely needful to explain, what these extracts so clearly show, that in Antioch, as in all the chief cities

of the empire, the theatre and other places of public amusement were open on Sunday. This, in common with so many other unscriptural practices still retained by the Church of Rome, was borrowed from the pagans. Sunday was one of *their* holidays, and therefore a day devoted to idleness and amusement. We find the best of the Fathers deploring the desecration of that which had come to be commemorated as 'the Lord's day.' They remonstrated against the manner in which it was profaned by the people, and especially by the members of the Church. But the general feeling ran so strongly in favour of the public games and entertainments, to which they had always been accustomed, that their remonstrances were of no avail. Their own leading members, the most influential men connected with their congregations, countenanced these Sunday exhibitions, and went to them when they would not go to church. Indeed, it appears that in Antioch at least it was held a vulgar thing to attend the house of God on ordinary occasions. That was only done by the 'common people;' but the fashionable way of spending the Sunday was the way followed by the pagan aristocracy, who passed that day in the circus or at the theatre.

This taste is spreading to some extent among the same class in our own country, and it is taken up, we regret to observe, by a certain portion of the working population. It may be well, however, to remind all parties, that in sanctioning the establishment of such a practice, they are literally, and not metaphorically, going back to 'the ways of the heathen,' and seeking, under the influence, direct or indirect, of a godless sciolism or a pernicious ecclesiasticism, to substitute the pagan Sunday for the Christian Sabbath.



## VIII.

### PASTORAL DIFFICULTIES.

*'Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea ;  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free ;  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.'*—WORDSWORTH.

FROM the lively interest excited by Chrysostom's labours at this period, the crowds that flocked to listen to him, and the strong influence for good he was exerting on the public mind, Flavian, the bishop, was wise enough to leave the duties of the pulpit almost entirely in his hands. This was rather an unusual arrangement, because the bishops were still regarded as the chief teachers of the Church, while the presbyters associated with them were looked upon as mere subordinate assistants. Notwithstanding the many corruptions which were gradually spreading, the ordinance of preaching was yet held to be of primary importance ; and hence the bishops, especially in the principal towns, were chosen quite as much with a view to their popular gifts as to their administrative talents. It is true that the spirit of sacerdotalism had by this time affected the minds of the clergy to a considerable extent, but it was kept in check by the wholesome traditions of the apostolic age ; so that this class had not yet degenerated into a tribe of mass-priests or ecclesiastical posture-masters.

The service of the sanctuary was not yet a mere ritualistic display, but 'a reasonable service.' Those

by whom it was conducted still appeared to think more of God than of *themselves*, and therefore did not venture to

‘Play such fantastic tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep.’

But while Flavian consulted the interests of the congregation and of the cause more than any feeling of his own by the arrangement he had made, Chrysostom’s position was sufficiently trying to render the preference thus bestowed upon him a thing of more than doubtful value. In saying so, we do not merely allude to the connection between *honores* and *labores*, although the latter were in this case far greater than the former. His trials, however, arose not so much from the weight of his labours—for he seems to have delighted in his work—as from the miserable bickerings, envyings, and evil-speakings that were going on between the two leading congregations in the place. During the first years of his ministry he was, if supported by crowds of admirers, and sustained by the public voice, continually surrounded by spies from the opposite camp, who waited for his halting, watching with all the eagerness of party spite to catch at any faults they could detect either in his public addresses or in his private conduct. It was a severe ordeal to be subjected to at the beginning of his course; but he was on his guard; and although there were thousands of things—ay, of the highest and noblest things—which broke from him in the fervour of his sacred enthusiasm, that were twisted and misrepresented by vulgar adherents on the one hand, and by vicious zealots on the other, yet he came through the ordeal without a stain upon his character—without ‘the smell of smoke upon his garments.’ A devout man, and one that feared God continually, he was so fenced round by the presence and protection of his Master, that he might have said to his church-going watchers :

'Follow your envious courses, men of malice !  
You've Christian warrant for them, and no doubt  
In time will find your fit rewards.'

Looking at the cause of these unseemly contentions, it may surprise some of our readers to hear of two, if not three, independent 'bishops' living in Antioch at the same time. The party attending on the ministry of Apollinaris were probably Arians, and but feeble in point of numbers, as there is scarcely any notice taken of them beyond the fact that they existed and had a bishop of their own. The other two congregations, however, were of the orthodox creed ; and yet we find that the teachers of both were publicly recognised as 'bishops,' though they were but pastors of single congregations. Meletius and Paulinus were equally known by that title, and were also regarded as having an equal right to it by the Council of Constantinople, while the Churches of the East and West were yet one. How are we to reconcile this and similar facts (of which multitudes could be cited from the history of these times) with those theories of ecclesiastical government which are so confidently advocated by certain parties in our day, and which are declared to be essential to the very existence of a Church ?

These men were not bishops in the prelatic or diocesan meaning of that term, although they undoubtedly were so in the primitive or scriptural sense. They each acted simply as pastors and rulers over their own congregations. In other words, they were teaching presbyters, with separate flocks committed to their charge ; and to this class of men it was that the title of bishop or 'overseer' was assigned, both in the patristic and apostolic Church.

But as this question is likely to meet us again, let us in the meantime return to the state of matters between

the two congregations, and see how Chrysostom endeavoured to deal with the case.

From such information as we possess, it appears that his conduct was altogether worthy of his character. Though he was himself abused by the rival faction, more even than the bishop, because of the influence of his preaching in building up the principal congregation, and throwing the other into the shade, he yet appears to have acted throughout as a kind of mediator between the two parties. Disregarding the personal attacks which were made upon him, and never stopping even to notice them, he laboured to inculcate upon both the duty of mutual forbearance and brotherly love ; reminding them of the reproach they were bringing on the Christian cause in the eyes of the heathen, and of the advantage which that party were taking of their unbrotherly strife : for it was known that they were publicly rejoicing over their disputes, and predicting that they would soon make an end of each other. Chrysostom frequently addressed the congregation on the subject, and always in the same healing and warning strain. To give one or two examples of this, he said on one occasion : 'Behold, say the heathen, everything with the Christians is vainglory, love of power, and fraud. Take from them their crowd of followers, destroy the disease, the delusion of the multitude, and they are nothing ! Shall I tell you, further, what they say concerning our city ? how they accuse us of weakness and instability ? Any man, they assert, can, if he chooses, set up a sect and find a body of followers among them.'<sup>1</sup> One of the evil consequences of this unhappy division was the effect it had on the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. Offenders in the one congregation ran off to the other, and thereby escaped the means of correction and amendment provided for such cases. It seems that some even tried to

<sup>1</sup> Hom. in Ephes.

deter the clergy from the discharge of their duty in this respect, by threatening to secede from their congregations if any steps were taken against them. Referring to certain instances of this kind which came under his notice, Chrysostom says: 'Let such a man withdraw a thousand times, and go over to them. I say not this merely as regards transgressors or persons under scandal; but should any one be guiltless, and desire to change sides, let him depart.' To show that he was not speaking from any feeling of indifference to the welfare of such parties, he adds: 'I indeed may grieve, and beat my breast, and wail, and my bowels may yearn, as a man bereaved of one of his own members; but neither grief nor fear shall lead me to act in a manner unbecoming my office,'—that is, by making any unworthy concessions to those who might be inclined to follow a factious or fugitive course.

But besides the adherents of Paulinus, it appears that there were other sectaries in the place, holding principles of a still more objectionable kind. Of these, the most troublesome were a party known by the name of *Eunomians*, who made a great noise in the East at this time.<sup>1</sup> The party in question held opinions somewhat similar to those maintained by the Socinians of the present day, denying the true divinity of Christ, and asserting that the doctrines of the Bible were quite as much within the reach of human comprehension as those of the philosophers. They affirmed that there were no mysteries connected with Christianity, and seemed to have believed, with certain of our modern infidels, that where 'mystery begins, religion ends.' Chrysostom, while naturally disinclined to controversy, was not only

<sup>1</sup> Neander states that the leaders of this party, Aëtius and his disciple Eunomius, sought 'to give strict Arianism a more precise and logically consistent expression than had hitherto been done.' By which he means that they were philosophical, and not merely dogmatic, Arians. Vol. iv. p. 77 (Clark's Foreign Theological Library).

an accomplished theologian, but much too honest a man to keep silent, or to hide his views under the convenient cloak of 'charity,' where the interests of vital religion were concerned. He was no ecclesiastical politician; no popularity-hunter, playing fast and loose with his principles in order to gain the favour of men, and to extend the sphere of his *personal* influence. He 'held the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,' and was therefore prepared, like his Master before him, and all His apostles, to confront the teachers of error, and to expose himself to obloquy in defence of 'the truth.' As a specimen of the manner in which he argued with these rationalistic Eunomians, we give the following passage from one of his homilies on 1 Cor. xiii. 11:—'A child sees and hears many things, but it sees and hears and speaks nothing clearly. It understands things in a certain way, but nothing accurately; and I also know many things, but I only know them in part: I know, for instance, that God is everywhere present, and that He is present indivisibly; but how, I cannot tell. I know that He is without beginning, and without end; but how, I cannot say. For the understanding is not capable of comprehending how a being can exist which owes its origin neither to itself nor to another. I know that God has begotten the Son; but how, I know not. I eat food; but how it is separated into phlegm, blood, and bile, I know not. The things that we daily see and eat (that is, take into our very selves) we understand not; and yet we would pry into the very nature of God.'<sup>1</sup> In another homily on the same subject, he adds to these arguments, this: 'We cannot understand the nature of our own souls; we cannot so much as explain the union of the soul with the body; and yet we would pry into the very nature of God.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hom. de Incomprehens. i. sec. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The great argument which he employed against this party was that arising from the rapid spread of Christianity. They made comparisons

Another party with whom Chrysostom came into collision was that of the Jews. This party, which was strong alike in numbers and in zeal, joined the pagans in reviling and opposing the religion of Christ. With the view of meeting the misrepresentations of these ancient adversaries of the gospel, he delivered a series of discourses which are preserved among his works. To the Jewish opponents now mentioned may be added certain Judaizing Christians, called sometimes *Protopaschites* and sometimes *Quartodecimani*;<sup>1</sup> but as we shall have occasion to notice these along with the Novatian heretics afterwards, we shall not dwell further on the subject at present.

The most powerful antagonists, however, with whom Chrysostom had to do at Antioch were the heathen. They formed a very considerable body, nearly the half of the population, embracing some of the higher and a large proportion of the lower orders. We have already stated the causes which led so many of the old aristocracy to adhere to the old religion, and the evil influence they had on that class of Chrysostom's hearers with whom they associated. There were not a few, however, among

between the apostles and the philosophers, maintaining that the former were but illiterate men, and that they were only successful in gaining over to their views the illiterate multitude. Chrysostom took them on their own ground, and showed that the want of cultivation on the part of the apostles was but a proof of the divinity of the religion which they taught, and which supplanted heathenism in spite of its learning and culture. 'That fishermen could impart to slaves, nurses, and eunuchs, a wisdom so divine, is,' he said, 'the greatest proof of the operation of the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>1</sup> It may be stated here, however, that this sect celebrated the passover before the Lord's Supper, and refused to submit to the edict of the Council of Nice fixing the time for the celebration of Easter. There were also some remnants of the Manicheans and Gnostics scattered through the rural districts of Syria, with whom the Presbyter of Antioch came into contact. Libanius, in one of his letters, recommends the Manicheans of Palestine to the protection of Priscus the governor, speaking favourably of their principles, and saying that 'they injured no man, but were persecuted by some.' *Epist.* 1344. Theodoret also alludes to the Gnostics of Syria, *Epist.* 81.

the disciples of paganism who had some sense of duty and of moral decency about them. Such individuals were so confounded and disgusted with the inconsistent behaviour of the class of religious professors to whom we allude, that they were only the more confirmed in their opposition to the gospel by what they saw of their conduct. Chrysostom often advised the corrupt formalists above mentioned to give up disputing with the pagans, till they could set them a better example than they did. 'Let us overcome the heathen,' says he, 'by the example of our *lives* rather than by our *words*. That is the right manner of contention, that the incontrovertible proof—the proof of deeds. The heathen do not care for our words, but they try our actions, and say, "First act according to your words, and then admonish others. But if you say that there are a thousand good things in the future life, and yet appear to cleave as closely to things present as if there were nothing to hope for after death, I shall believe your actions more readily than your words!" Let us by our example and conversation convert the heathen; let us build up the Church with their souls, and enrich it with this treasure. *Nothing is so precious as a soul—not the whole world*. If thou givest a thousand-fold to the poor, thou hast not done so much as he who converts one soul.'<sup>1</sup>

For a young man just entering on his labours, such difficulties as we have just referred to must have been not a little trying. But, so far as professional qualifications were concerned, Chrysostom was well prepared to meet them. There was, as we have shown, a very thorough foundation laid for the kind of work to which he was now called, by the classical and theological training he had received under Libanius and Diodorus. This, however, was but the *groundwork*, essential in itself, but often rendered comparatively useless by the want of a

<sup>1</sup> Hom. I Cor. iii.



further and more practical development of the materials thus gathered. Fortunately for himself, and for the cause to which he was led to devote his life, his stock of knowledge was not left in the state of 'raw material ;' but was, on the contrary, carefully prepared for effective use when the proper time came. As regards his theological studies in particular, and the principles of exegesis which he had learnt from the founder of the school of Antioch, these were also followed up and brought out in practical detail by his close and prayerful examination of the Scriptures in private. The course which the Apostle Paul recommended to Timothy was the very course that Chrysostom pursued. He 'gave attendance to reading, to exhortation (or the art of exhorting), to doctrine ;' he 'gave himself wholly to them,' and at length 'his profiting appeared to all.' So far as can be judged from an examination of his homilies, he appears to have followed different plans in preparing for the pulpit. At the beginning of his ministry, it is probable that he wrote out his discourses pretty fully ; but as his preaching engagements multiplied, he was obliged to content himself with an outline, in which the main features of his subject were distinctly mapped out, and at some points filled in, like the first but finished sketches of a skilful painter. It occurs to us, though the fact has not been noticed by any of his biographers, that he must have had the gift of 'mental composition,' so as to weave together in that way the details of addresses that he had no leisure to work out with the pen. We cannot otherwise account for the logical coherence as well as the literary polish of many homilies, not transcribed from his own notes, but taken down in short-hand by some of his hearers. Though he had the faculty of extemporaneous utterance in a remarkable degree, it is clear that he kept up his habits of study and composition to the last. Thus he was always fresh, and escaped the narrowing and lowering

effect which is sure to result from a lazy reliance on the resources of the hour. Brought up in the traditions of the Greek school, he knew the danger of this habit, and the consequent necessity of consuming much of 'the midnight oil.' A first-rate sermon or speech is, in fact, as truly a work of art as a first-rate poem; requiring the same structural unity, the same central inspiration, the same patient labour in perfecting its details. But yet the gift of extempore speech is one of the natural endowments of every true orator; and when that gift is exercised under the control of a disciplined taste, it is capable of producing a more lively impression than the most laboured preparations of the study. If it will not stand the test of reading so well, it seems to stand the test of hearing much better. It is more immediately like an audible voice from the spirit of the mind, or 'the mind of the spirit'—a jet of light flashing forth directly from the living soul. This power Chrysostom sometimes employed with great effect. We have an example of it in one of his homilies for the poor, or 'charity sermons,' as we call them. On a winter day, as he was walking towards the church, he came on a group of beggars huddled together on the frozen ground, trembling with cold, and pinched with hunger. He was so much affected by the spectacle, that he resolved at once to appeal to the congregation on their behalf; and he did so in a spirit that thrilled his audience, and produced something more substantial than mere applause. The skill with which he seized on passing incidents is illustrated in several of his addresses. Thus, on one occasion, he observed that the attention of his hearers was diverted by the man who was lighting the church lamps. It is needless to remark that any interruption of that kind is quite sufficient to turn aside the thoughts of a whole congregation, even at the moment when they are most deeply interested, and thus to mar the impression of all

that has been previously said ; so much are men under the influence of their senses, and so like a dream are the highest things of another world in comparison with the commonest trifles of this. Observing the sudden interest which the lamplighter had excited, Chrysostom exclaims : 'Awake from your inattention ! shake off your sloth ! While I am explaining to you the Holy Scriptures, ye have turned your eyes to the lamps, and to the man who is employed in lighting them. How sad a sign of indifference ! I also kindle for you a light—the light of the sacred word. On my tongue burns the flame of spiritual instruction—a better and a greater light than that on which you are all so intently gazing.'<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, so ample were the resources of this renowned preacher, and so great the readiness with which he could turn them to account, that he often was led to throw aside the notes he had prepared, and to follow some new train of thought which he considered better calculated to affect the minds of the people. And more than once, when he was about to end his discourse, the congregation displayed such tokens of interest (expressed by the clapping of their hands or otherwise), so earnest a desire that he would not stop, that he was led to continue his address, with not less but even greater effect, after all the matter he had prepared or premeditated was fully exhausted. Considering the character of some of his discourses—the keen, searching, we would almost say painful and mortifying influence they must have had on the minds of the people—it is really astonishing how they could have borne them. He was always a faithful and fearless reprovee ; but there were times when his denunciations of vice—those vices to which his hearers were most notoriously addicted—were not only scathing, but absolutely scorching. We may take, as an example (and by no means an extreme one), his homily on the parable of the talents.

<sup>1</sup> In Genes. Hom. iv.

In that homily he addressed himself directly to every class in his audience—to kings and rulers, generals and judges—to rich and poor, bond and free. He demands of the great by what means they had acquired their wealth, and how they spent it: ‘whether on courtezans or the poor; whether on parasites and flatterers, or on the needy and distressed; whether in luxury and prodigality, or in works of charity and mercy.’ These were questions every one of which struck home and drew blood, in the case of not a few of the highest and the proudest who were present there before him. After dealing with the common people in the same style, he at last turns to the clergy, and sets forth their duties in a way that must have told on many among them with terrible effect. In short, looking at the character and habits of those to whom these things were spoken, they must have come down upon them, as a body, like a shower of tropical hailstones. And yet such was the power which he exerted over their minds, that they not only listened with rapt attention to every syllable he said, but received his statements with successive bursts of applause. There were some, however, on whom they made a deeper and more satisfactory impression; for we are told that they sobbed and wept. We have only been able to give a mere outline of this remarkable discourse; but throughout the whole there runs a strain of solemn grandeur and sublime earnestness, that was sure to go to the hearts of all who had any spark of right feeling about them. The preacher, observing this emotion, turned to those who were shedding tears all over the church, and said: ‘While you are thus moved, just think, for my sake, each man upon his enemy, though your hearts may be overflowing with grief. Seek to preserve him while living; mourn for him when dead, not in outward show, but in sincerity of heart and soul. And though you should yourselves be called upon to suffer in averting

evil from the man who has wronged you, be ready to do and to undergo all things, that great may be your reward in heaven.'

But these specimens of Chrysostom's homilies, striking though they be, can give but a very inadequate impression of what they were as they came from himself. The most of them were taken down by short-hand writers ; and, however closely reproduced, the subtler and finer portions must have escaped in the process. They are just those minute traits, which no reporter can catch, that give a discourse its own distinctive character and power. Copies from the works of the great masters are not to be despised. Some of them are very good in their way ; and as far as the figures and proportions go, these copies may be as like the originals as possible. Measured by square and rule, or judged of even by their general appearance, they look very nearly the same. But place them alongside of each other, and the poet's exclamation at once starts to your lips :

'The same—but oh, how different !'

Yes, indeed ! The difference is great and complete. The one is alive, the other is dead ; the one is a genuine creation, the other an artificial production. The copy is exact in all its parts ; but while it keeps the word of promise to the eye, it breaks it to the heart. Faultless in the letter it may be, but it is utterly faithless in the spirit. This observation holds more true of oratory than of any other of the arts. Even the speaker's *own written* copy of his address will convey but an imperfect conception of what he has spoken. It wants the life, the expression, the electric force, the 'hidden fire' that the orator threw into it, and which no one else, not even that orator himself, can bring back to it after the moment of inspiration has passed away. Hence it may be affirmed that the finest efforts of oratorical genius are as good as

lost to the world. They perished at their birth, and all the memorials of them left are but their bodily remains. In some cases we have little more than dry bones ; in others the skeletons are covered with flesh and sinew, as in Ezekiel's vision ; but when we come to look closely at them, we find that 'there is no breath in them.' We know what painters, sculptors, poets, can do. We have their works in their completest and most perfect form ; but there are no sufficient data by which we can judge of man's achievements in this direction. Who by reading Demosthenes' speeches on the Crown, or Chatham's on the American War, Bossuet's Funeral Orations, Massillon's Lent Sermons, or the best discourses of Chalmers and Melville, can form any adequate idea of the effects such masterpieces of eloquence produced on those who heard them ?

## IX.

### INSURRECTION AT ANTIOCH.

‘ God alone  
Instructeth how to mourn. He doth not trust  
His higher lesson to a voice or hand  
Subordinate. Behold ! he cometh forth !  
Oh, stiff disciple, how thyself to learn  
The alphabet of tears.’

SIGOURNEY.

‘ Sorrow seems sent for our instruction, as we darken the cages of birds when we would teach them how to sing.’—J. PAUL RICHTER.

THE homily from which our last quotation was taken was delivered at a memorable crisis in the history of Antioch, when the inhabitants, panic-stricken, were deserting their homes, and flying from the city to escape the Emperor's vengeance. Under the first impulse of unreasoning terror, some of the leading citizens pursued this course ; but the great majority soon felt that it was useless, as they knew that there was no part of the world where the long hand of the world's ruler could not reach them. Their second thought, therefore, was to run to the ‘ old church ’ on the farther side of the river, and take refuge under the horns of the altar. Prior to this period the right of sanctuary had been claimed by the clergy ; and although that right was disputed by the State authorities, yet they had to some extent succeeded in establishing it. The present, however, was not a case in which they could venture to assert it. The criminals, embracing as they did nearly

the whole of the population, were too numerous to be protected, and the crime itself was of much too grave a character to be defended or sanctioned in any shape. That crime was high treason, accompanied by circumstances of gross and almost unexampled aggravation. The case was as follows :—

In the year A.D. 387, the Emperor Theodosius issued an edict requiring the city to furnish a certain amount of tribute for the use of the imperial treasury. The sum demanded seems to have been large beyond all former precedent, and was laid as a tax upon the inhabitants ; the authorities, civil and military, being made responsible for the levying of it. The area of taxation extended to all ranks, including indeed every individual who had any means on which the tax-gatherers could lay their hands.<sup>1</sup> It was a most oppressive measure, though one to which the people were always more or less exposed during the latter days of the empire. In this case, however, the assessment was so exceptionally heavy, that it appeared as if there was no possibility of raising it. Hence the whole town was thrown into a state of intense excitement, showing that this was one of those acts of oppression which make even wise men mad. The citizens as a body were not only exasperated, but almost driven to despair. Some hastened to the churches, to implore the help of the Almighty. Others ran to the magistrates, but found they had fled. A number of the more influential waited on the Roman governor to entreat his interference, and to warn him of the dangerous spirit that was spreading among the people. Meeting with no sympathy in that quarter,

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon assigns two reasons for the heaviness of the tax : (1) the exigencies of the Gothic war ; and (2) the fact that the tenth year of the Emperor's reign had come, and the soldiers were to have a liberal donative. As the provinces of Asia were less involved in the distress, they were less inclined to contribute to the relief of Europe.—*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxvii.



they next appealed to the bishop, hoping that he might have influence enough with the authorities at Constantinople to procure some mitigation of their burden. The bishop, however, was from home; and the multitude finding every door shut, and every ear deaf to their complaints, broke out at last into a state of open insurrection. Rushing to the market-place, the first thing they did was to pull down the statues of the imperial family, including those of the Emperor, the Empress, and their two sons Arcadius and Honorius. These statues they dragged with contumely through the streets, accompanying the act with shouts of insulting triumph, and with snatches of obscene ballads and revolutionary songs. Their temper was roused to such a pitch, that the rulers of the city did not venture to face the storm, while the richer classes had too much sympathy with the revoltors to expose themselves to any danger by attempting to restrain them. For some time Antioch—'the Queen of the East'—was entirely in the hands of the mob, who had already set fire to the house of one of the principal inhabitants, and were proceeding to further extremities, when a body of archers, suddenly arriving on the scene, discharged a shower of arrows amongst them, and set them at once to flight. The appearance of these soldiers was found quite sufficient to put an end to the outbreak. It was said to have been headed and mainly instigated by the 'roughs' or lawless classes of the town, who took advantage of the public discontent for purposes of their own.

Order being thus quickly restored, the authorities took prompt measures for the punishment of the rioters. The governor, fearing lest he should be called to account for his want of firmness at the outset, seemed determined to compensate for his previous remissness by his zeal in enforcing the law against those who took any part in the insurrection. Multitudes of every age and sex were

hurried before the tribunals, summarily tried, and immediately executed.<sup>1</sup>

But this was only the beginning of sorrows. It was known that men of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, were loud in their complaints against the government, and had participated more or less in the spirit of sedition by which the mob were encouraged to break out into open mutiny, as they had done. Messengers were at once despatched to Constantinople for the purpose of reporting what had taken place, and receiving the Emperor's instructions on the subject. During this period of suspense the whole place was filled with dismay. It seemed as if the angel of destruction which David saw was hovering over the city, with a drawn sword in his hand; and the hearts of the inhabitants melted within them for fear of the judgment that was coming upon them. The wrath of Theodosius was no light matter under any circumstances. He was a man of stern and resolute character, jealous of his honour as a prince, and of his authority as a ruler. Under less provocation than he had received in this case he had put the city of Thessalonica to the sword, and deluged its streets with the blood of its inhabitants. And although that act of vengeance did not take place till after this period, yet it was known that Theodosius was capable of such deeds when his passions were kindled; and considering the gross outrage offered to himself, his consort,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his third homily, Chrysostom speaks of the cruel measures that were taken by the rulers of the city on this occasion. 'Some,' he says, 'have perished by the sword, others by fire, and others were cast amongst wild beasts; and these were not only men, but children, that so suffered. Without a moment's grace, they were carried off to the pit, and armed soldiers guarded them on either side, and watched that none might rescue the condemned. Mothers also followed afar off, and witnessed the cutting off of their children, but dared not bewail their calamity; for terror overcame grief, and fear gained the mastery of nature.'—Hom. ad Pop. Ant. iii. sec. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The Empress Flacilla was dead,—a circumstance which rendered the outrage to her statue still more exasperating to her imperial husband.

and his sons, nothing less than the doom of Thessalonica was expected by the people of Antioch. Hence the city, like Zion in the time of her desolation, was sitting in the dust; her streets were deserted, her dwellings were silent, and all her ways mourned. The forum, the theatre, the circus, were abandoned by the crowd; social intercourse was entirely suspended; the tide of business stood still. The senators and most distinguished citizens fled from their dwellings, and sought refuge for themselves and their families in the mountains and forests, or wherever they thought they could hide their heads. The young men who came from the provinces to pursue their studies in the capital returned at once to their homes, and all the foreigners (many of whom were chief ringleaders in the rebellion) hurried away, by every route they could find, from a place which they now looked upon as devoted to destruction.

The whole scene presents a terrible example of the result of despotic power—of that state of things which Solomon had in his view when he said that ‘the king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion,’ and ‘as the messengers of death.’ As regards the king who was concerned in this case, it was well known that ‘his wrath was cruel, and his anger outrageous;’ and there was therefore nothing too dreadful for the people to apprehend from the indignation of the insulted Theodosius.

Immediately before the outbreak took place, the city preacher was engaged in pointing out to his audience the spirit of blasphemy and brutality that seemed to be spreading among certain classes of the population. With that prophetic or divining faculty which belongs to men of his order of mind, he detected that there was some mischief brewing—some moral or social tempest gathering in the distance. This conclusion he drew from the elements of evil that were at work, and that he felt to be operating with greater force and activity than usual

among the general mass of the people, manifesting themselves in the forms we have mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Hence in the first discourse which he addressed to them after the insurrection had broken out, and while they were all looking forward with terror to the course the Emperor was likely to take, he reminded them of the forewarning he had given them. After encouraging them to conquer their fears by faith in God, and by the hopes and consolations of His word, he goes on to say :—

‘I lately addressed a lengthened discourse to you, in consequence of your affection for me ; and I saw that all followed me attentively, and that none removed from the body of the church.’<sup>2</sup> I feel thankful to you for your patience then, and have received the reward of my pains. But I besought of you then another reward along with that one. Perhaps you know and remember it. What, then, was the reward ? It was that you should punish and bring to their senses the blasphemers throughout the city, and that you should restrain those who have insulted God, and behaved in an unruly fashion. I do not think that I then spoke these things of myself ; but

<sup>1</sup> In that premonitory discourse, the statements made by the preacher are certainly *striking* enough, in more senses than one,<sup>1</sup> and show how strongly he felt on the subject. ‘But since our discourse,’ he says, ‘has now turned on the subject of blasphemy, I wish to ask one favour of you all in return for this address I have delivered to you, which is, that you will chastise on my behalf the blasphemers of this city ; and should you hear in the public streets or in the forum any one blaspheme God, go up to him, and rebuke him ; and if it be necessary to inflict blows, spare not to do so. *Smite him on the face ; strike him on the mouth ; sanctify thy hand with the blow.*’ With all his fine culture and earnest devotion of character, the spirit of the priest was strong in Chrysostom, who was evidently thinking of Phinehas, and some of the Old Testament worthies, when he recommended this sort of discipline. Something is also, no doubt, due to the notions and habits of the time. If all reports be true, the Irish priesthood find their black thorn sticks ‘profitable for correction’ at this day. The rule, however, is one of those that are ‘more honoured in the breach than the observance.’

<sup>2</sup> οὐδὲνα ἐκ μέρους ὑπεστέφισατε τῆς ἰδού.

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch, sec. 12.

that, since God sees into the future, He put these things into my mind. For if we had punished those that were so daring, these things would not now have happened which have occurred. How much better would it have been, if danger was to be incurred, to suffer for correcting and chastising these men,—and this would have brought to us the crown of martyrdom,—than now to be afraid and tremble, and to expect death in consequence of the unruliness of these men! Behold, what was the offence of the few has become the reproach of the many. Behold, for their sakes we are all now put in fear, and we suffer the penalty of their daring. . . . These things I forewarned you of, these things have now come to pass, and we are paying the penalty of that trifling. You overlooked it when God was outraged: behold, He has suffered the king to be outraged, and extreme danger to impend over us all, that by fear of this we may pay the penalty of that neglect.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the state of intense excitement that prevailed at this period, we may easily imagine that such exhortations could not fail to produce a strong effect on the minds of the people. It appears, however, that they responded to these statements by clapping their hands in the usual way. But this was not the kind of response the preacher either desired or expected; and he therefore reproved them at once for indulging in such demonstrations. 'The church,' he says, 'is not a theatre, that we should listen for pleasure. . . . Of what use to me are these shouts, and what need have I of this applause and tumult? My praise only is, that by your works you should show forth all that is said: then shall I be enviable and happy, not when you receive me thus, but when you do with all alacrity whatever you hear from me.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. i. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. ii. secs. 3, 4.

After the bishop's departure for Constantinople,<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom endeavoured to cheer the people by predicting the success of his mission, pronouncing at the same time the following touching eulogy on Flavian's character—one no less honourable to the person who received than it was to him who paid it. It proves at least that the presbyter of Antioch was a true-hearted brother, and a most trustworthy fellow-labourer. 'When,' said he, 'I behold that vacant throne deserted, and without its master, I at the same time both weep and rejoice. I weep because I see not our father present, but I rejoice that he hath undertaken this journey for our preservation, and hath departed to snatch from the fury of the Emperor so great a multitude. This is to you an ornament ; to him a crown. An ornament to you, because ye have chosen such a father ; a crown to him, because he is attached with so much tenderness to his children, and hath confirmed by his works the words of Christ. For, having been taught that "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," he departed ready to lay down his life for us all. Still there were many obstacles to his departure, many circumstances inducing him to stay : his advanced age ; his bodily infirmity ; the season of the year ; the necessity of his presence at the approaching festival ; and besides these reasons, his only sister lying at the point of death. But he disregarded alike old age, infirmity of body, the ties of kindred, the severity of the season, and the fatigues of the journey ; and, preferring you and your safety to everything else, he broke through all these restraints, and as a youth the aged man speeds away, borne upon the wings of zeal.<sup>2</sup> On this account I trust there may be a good hope. God will not over-

<sup>1</sup> Flavian went thither at the urgent request of the citizens to intercede for them with the Emperor.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. iii. sec. i. These statements had no doubt some reference to the party of Paulinus, who were still standing out against Flavian, and labouring to lower his character and influence.

look such earnestness and such efforts. I know that his appearance will suffice to appease the wrath of the pious Emperor. For not the speech alone, but the aspect of holy men, is full of spiritual grace. Moreover, he is filled with much wisdom, and experienced in the divine laws : he will speak to the Emperor as Moses spake to God : "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin ; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." For holy men are so filled with love, that they had rather die with their children than live without them.'<sup>1</sup>

In the excited state of the public mind at this period, the town was daily filled with rumours of the most alarming kind. It was reported, for instance, that troops were on their way from Constantinople, for the purpose of destroying and plundering the city. In order to allay the excitement, the prefect appeared in the church. This official being a pagan, Chrysostom was quite scandalized at the state of panic in which he saw the congregation plunged. 'I admired,' he says, 'the solicitude of the magistrate who, when he beheld the city agitated, and every one contemplating flight, came hither, comforted and cheered you with better hope ; but, for your sakes, I felt ashamed that, after so many exhortations, you needed consolation from without. I wished that the earth might open and swallow me up when I heard him address you ; at one time exhorting you (to patience), at another censuring your ill-timed and irrational terror. It was not becoming that ye should have been instructed by him ; ye ought to have been instructors to the heathen.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. iii. He exhorts the people to assist the bishop by their prayers. While he went on such an embassy to the Emperor, 'let us,' he says, 'go on an embassy to the Majesty of heaven !'

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xvi. 'With what eyes,' he adds, 'shall we hereafter look upon the unbelievers, we who were so timid and cowardly ? We are but men, you say. On that very account we ought not to be terrified, because we are men and not brutes. For these are frightened by all manner of sounds and noises, because they have not the intelligence which should dispel fear.'

When the bishop left Antioch, he hoped to have reached Constantinople before the messengers who had been sent by the governor. In this, however, he was disappointed ; for he found that the Emperor had not only received the information brought by these messengers, but that he had despatched two officers of State, Cæsarius and Helebichius, to examine into the particulars of the insurrection, to make strict inquiry concerning all the parties engaged in it, and to proceed against them according to the utmost rigour of the law ; reserving to himself the right of deciding what kind and amount of punishment should be inflicted on the city after the chief ringleaders were dealt with. These imperial commissioners appear to have carried out their instructions to the letter. They employed all possible means to discover those who were in any way concerned in the riots, using the rack for the purpose of extorting confessions from reluctant or incriminated witnesses ; and it appears that even the first men in the city were put to the torture. Persons of senatorial rank were dragged in chains through the streets to the judgment-seat ; and members of the most distinguished families were mixed up with the crowd in front of the court-house, listening to the cries of their friends under the rack, and waiting to hear the result of their trial.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of the judicial examinations and executions going on at this crisis, the monks came down from the mountains in order to interpose on behalf of their old friends and fellow-citizens. The streets were filled with bands of these simple-minded, but high-hearted recluses. They forced their way into the court-house ; they remonstrated with the commissioners on the injustice and cruelty of their proceedings ; and, utterly

<sup>1</sup> Yet these commissioners had a reputation for justice and humanity ; and in other respects they seem to have sustained that reputation in this case. Cæsarius is styled *Magister* ; Ellebichius or Hellebicius, *Magister Militum*.



disregarding any resentment their interference might provoke, or any personal danger that might result from it, they persisted in pressing on the judges the Christian duties of justice, moderation, and mercy. Among these was a monk of the name of Macedonius, a person of high repute among the ascetics, and of whom we read as one of the early friends of Theodoret.<sup>1</sup> Though but an unlearned man, and not even able to read the Scriptures, he had come to acquire an extraordinary acquaintance with the divine word. He was also universally venerated for his unrivalled austerities, and the extent of his spiritual attainments. Meeting the imperial commissioners as they were riding on horseback to the court, Macedonius, seizing one of them by the cloak, summoned them both to stop. We may imagine their surprise at being addressed in this way by an aged man, of rustic appearance and of mean attire; but being told who he was, they immediately dismounted and embraced his knees. 'Tell the Emperor, my beloved,' says the aged monk, 'that if he is an Emperor, he is also a man; that being a man, he rules over those who partake of the same nature with himself, and that man is created after the image of God. Let him not then command that the image of God be so cruelly and unmercifully destroyed. Let him reflect that, in the place of one brazen image,<sup>2</sup> we can easily fabricate many; but that it is utterly beyond his power to restore a single hair of the heads of his murdered victims.'<sup>3</sup>

Who, on reading such an incident, can fail to see wherein the strength of Monachism lay? It lay in that grand superiority alike to the fear or the favour of man, which comes from a true faith in God. The monks, on the whole, were the most devoted and the most disin-

<sup>1</sup> Referred to in chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the mutilated statues of the imperial family.

<sup>3</sup> Theodor. lib. v. c. 19.

terested body of Christians existing at that period. On them, more than on any other class, had descended the spirit of those martyrs who, in the centuries immediately preceding, had sealed their faith with their blood. Indeed, many of them were the children of these very martyrs, and were originally driven into the wilderness by the same persecutions in which their fathers had perished. Having abandoned the world, and embraced a life of poverty and self-denial, they had no private interests to serve, and were therefore placed above the influence of mere secular motives. Hence they were noted for their moral courage and fearless independence, —qualities not a little required in those days of feudal tyranny and high-handed oppression, when what Wordsworth calls

‘The good old plan,  
That they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can,’

prevailed almost universally. Indeed, it may be said that the monks were the only men in that age who ventured to challenge the proceedings of the great, and to check the insolence of power. The records of the time contain many instances of evil-doers in high places, who, when no other voice could reach them, were speedily brought to their senses by these intrepid champions of justice and humanity. The civil magistrate who abused his authority, and the episcopal ruler who neglected his duty, were sometimes startled in the midst of their social gaieties or official pomp by the presence of a lean, hollow-eyed, barefooted deputation from the desert, whose rare visits created quite a commotion in the cities to which they came, and left an impression on the minds of the culprits that was not forgotten.

The presence of his old friends from the desert, and the part they took on this occasion, were evidently a source of high gratification to Chrysostom. To the in-

fluence of these friends he traces the sudden arrest that was laid on the cruel proceedings of the judges, as well as the wonderful calm which had settled down upon the city. After reminding his hearers of the sense of relief that God had given them, he went on to tell them of the manner in which the monks had acted :<sup>1</sup> 'When they beheld the dark cloud spreading around the city, leaving their cells and caverns, they poured down in all directions like angels from above, and the city was made like unto heaven. Those holy men, wherever seen, by their aspect alone consoled the mourners, and led them to look with contempt on every calamity. For who, on beholding these, would not smile at death, would not despise life? But this was not the only wonder. Going direct to the magistrates themselves, they spoke to them boldly on behalf of the accused. They were ready to shed their blood, and to lay down their heads, so that they might deliver the prisoners from their expected fate. They declared that they would not depart till the judges had spared the inhabitants of the town, or sent *them* along with the accused before the Emperor. "The ruler of our world," said one of them, "loveth God; he is one of the faithful, and leads a godly life. We will then assuredly succeed in pacifying him. We will not depute you, but neither will we allow you to stain the sword with blood, or cut off the heads of any more. If you desist not, let us die together with the offenders. We acknowledge that great outrages have been committed; but the guilt of these transgressions cannot exceed the humanity of the Emperor."'

At this point he brings in the story of Macedonius, of which we have already given Theodoret's account (which is substantially the same as Chrysostom's), and then goes on to contrast the conduct of the hill-men with that of the heathen teachers or philosophers of the city. The

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xvii. sec. 1.

picture he gives of the latter, if somewhat severe, is exceedingly graphic:—

‘Where are now the men that go about in cloaks, with their long beards, and big clubs in their right hands—the philosophers of the Gentiles—the offscourings of Cynicism—men more degraded than the dogs under the table, and who do everything for the sake of their bellies? They all left the city; they vanished; they hid themselves in caves; while those only who, according to truth, placed their philosophy in their actions, showed themselves fearlessly in the forum, as if no misfortune had befallen the place. The inhabitants of the city fled to the mountains and deserts, while the inhabitants of the desert marched into the city; proving by their works, as I have not ceased to say to you in former days, that not even the furnace hath power to hurt the man who lives a godly life.’<sup>1</sup>

Contrasting these simple men also with the senators and chief magistrates, ‘possessors of immeasurable wealth,’ who had ‘deserted their houses and consulted their own safety,’ he goes on to add: ‘But the indigent monks, whose only possessions were their coarse garments, who lived in rustic simplicity, and whose intercourse had been confined to mountains and forests, stood as lions in the midst of the dangers at which all others quailed and trembled; effecting by their great and lofty spirit, not after many days, but in a moment, the dispersion of the storm! Like brave warriors, without entering into the combat at all, but simply appearing in order of battle, and shouting, they put their adversaries to flight. Thus in one day these champions descended, reasoned, averted the impending calamity, and returned to their cells. So mighty is the wisdom which Christ hath given unto men!’<sup>2</sup>

The incident of which our eminent orator speaks in

<sup>1</sup> Hom. xvii. ad Pop. Antioch. sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xvii. sec. 2.

such glowing terms is surely well worthy of the admiration which he bestows upon it. Where, in the annals of the modern world, amid all the terrible convulsions by which kingdoms and capitals have been visited, even within the last century, shall we find religious heroes like these? Where shall we find men rendered fearless by their contempt of death, interposing in this manner between tyrants and their victims, between judicial murderers and the objects of their vengeance; offering to lay down their lives for their brethren, and resolved to perish with them rather than see them oppressed and victimized by the hand of power? Such were the monks before the days of Gregory the Great—what are they now?<sup>1</sup>

And here let us just look for a moment at him who celebrates their faith and courage in strains that were something more than mere strokes of rhetoric. We have seen how tenderly and reverentially he spoke of the bishop on his departure from Antioch; and we shall yet further see, in the course of the next chapter, how exultingly he rejoices over the success of his mission, and how

<sup>1</sup> We may here remark that Gibbon, in his brilliant version of the sedition of Antioch, softens and tones down everything. According to him, 'the ministers of Theodosius performed with reluctance the cruel task which had been assigned them: they dropped a gentle tear over the calamities of the people, and they listened with reverence to the pressing solicitations of the monks and hermits who descended in swarms from the mountains.' When he has thus raised 'the ministers of Theodosius' into objects of almost admiration, he is afraid he may have raised the ministers of Christ into objects of admiration yet warmer; and that must not be. Therefore he adds a note, which is a good specimen of what critics call 'damning with faint praise.' The note is as follows:—'Chrysostom opposes *their* courage, which was not attended with much risk, to the cowardly flight of the Cynics.' These holy men, 'who had descended in swarms from the mountains,' who 'had no weapons but the armour of righteousness—a living faith and a lofty spirit which led them to confront the imperial judges, and to show their sympathy with the objects of their wrath by offering to die with them—were still worthy, as we think, of a little more praise than he is willing to give them.

proudly he dwells upon it. The great church ruler, and these recluses of the desert, stood at the very opposite poles of social and ecclesiastical life ; and yet our large-hearted presbyter can sympathize equally with both. From which we may learn that he was no class-preacher, just because he was no class-man ; but one who, in his measure, like his Master, was full of that spirit which makes 'all mankind kin'—an heir of universal humanity—a man of men !

## X.

### THE CITY PREACHER.

*'The proud he tamed, the penitent he cheered,  
Nor to rebuke the rich offender feared ;  
His preaching much, but more his practice brought,  
A living sermon of the truths he taught.'*

DRYDEN.

**S**OLOMON, as our readers will remember, tells us of a little city that was besieged by a great king, but delivered by 'a poor wise man.' The lesson which he draws from the incident is, that 'wisdom is better than weapons of war,' and that 'the words of the wise are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.' The result of Flavian's visit to Constantinople furnishes a happy illustration of this ancient parable.

He arrived there at a propitious time, immediately before Easter. 'The oil of mercy,' says Ambrose, 'glistens on the festivals of the Church ;'<sup>1</sup> and of all these festivals, Easter was regarded as the most important. At that season the Christians, according to ancient usage, were accustomed to testify their gratitude to the great Deliverer by deeds of benevolence ; and so strongly was this obligation felt, that it was even recognised in the public laws of the empire. It was about this period that Theodosius issued an edict in which he ordered all prisoners to be released in honour of the festival. In that edict he said, referring to the executions which had taken

<sup>1</sup> Serm. xiv. Ps. cxlviii. 7.

place during the previous year, 'Would that I were able to recall the executed ! Would that I could reverse their doom, and restore the dead to life !' The act was thoroughly characteristic of Theodosius the Great, who, though wilful and impulsive, was singularly open to the softening influence of religious impressions. When Flavian was admitted to an audience, he reminded the Emperor of the statement we have just quoted, commenting, no doubt, as he might well have done, on the humane and Christian spirit by which it was prompted. In one of the homilies delivered by him after the bishop had left Antioch, and from which we gave a short extract in our last chapter, Chrysostom goes over the various arguments which 'his father,' as he reverently calls him, was to employ for the purpose of appeasing the Emperor's wrath. This proves, what was antecedently probable, that the bishop had taken counsel with his distinguished presbyter before his departure, and had obtained his assistance in the preparation of his case. Among the other means which Chrysostom used for quieting the agitation of the people was the reading of the edict to which we have just referred ; predicting, at the same time, that when the bishop brought up that particular passage before the Emperor's mind, he could not fail to be successful in his suit ; and it happened just as he had foreseen.

Referring to this part of the interview between Flavian and his sovereign, Chrysostom states that Theodosius was deeply affected, and uttered words which became him more than his imperial crown. 'Is it then,' said the Emperor, 'wonderful that we, being men, should remit our anger against our fellow-men who have insulted us, when the Lord of the world, who came down to the earth, and took upon Him, for our sake, the form of a servant, prayed to His Father for His murderers, saying, "Forgive them ; for they know not what they do !"



Wherefore, then, are ye surprised that we forgive our fellow-servants?'<sup>1</sup>

It is Plato who, if we remember rightly, says that generosity is the best kind of nobility. It certainly is one of the surest marks of it. The people of Antioch, as they thought of the incensed Emperor in these days, might perhaps be inclined to exclaim, with the poet :

‘He doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus ; and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.’

But passionate as he was by nature, and wilful as the exercise of irresponsible power was but too well fitted to make him, the religion of Christ had obtained a strong hold of the heart of Theodosius ; and the spirit which he displayed in this case was not only worthy of him as a Christian prince, but fitted to shed a lustre on the faith which he professed. The actual result of it was to lead a large number of the pagans of Antioch to abandon the cause of heathenism, and to embrace that faith which had taught the master of a hundred legions to be merciful.

The Emperor, not satisfied with the assurance he had given to the bishop, wrote a letter to the inhabitants of the town, containing a full pardon of their offence, and promising to forget the public affront they had offered to himself and to his family. In order to give still more significance to this act of grace, he urged Flavian to return with all speed to his flock, that the letter of amnesty might arrive before the Easter festival was over ; so that the good news of the deliverance of the city might mingle with, and be the means of enhancing, the joy with which the people celebrated the spiritual deliverance of the world.

This was indeed ‘a crown’ to the aged prelate, as Chrysostom had predicted ; and we can imagine the

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xxi. sec. 4.

emotions of devout gratitude with which he kissed the Emperor's hand and gave to him his parting blessing, as he hastened away to bear the tidings of his mercy to the trembling thousands of Antioch.<sup>1</sup> A special messenger, despatched by Flavian, announced these tidings before his own arrival, and was received by the inhabitants with triumphal honours and all manner of public rejoicings.

On Easter day, A.D. 387, he who had been the daily adviser and comforter of his fellow-citizens throughout the whole of these troubles appeared in the pulpit. The crowd, usually great on such occasions, was on that day greater than it had ever been before. It seemed as if all Antioch was gathered together within the precincts of the sanctuary; and the living masses, filling the square porches and passages of the sacred edifice, might be seen heaving and surging like a sea up to the spot on which the preacher stood.<sup>2</sup> Casting his eye over that immense throng, agitated by various emotions, and then looking towards the aged bishop, he thus began: 'In the words with which I was wont to commence my appeal to your love in the time of danger, in the same words I shall commence my discourse to-day, and say with you, Praise be to God, who this day permits us to celebrate this holy feast with exceeding joy and gladness; who hath restored the head to the body, the shepherd to his flock, the master to his disciples, the leader to his soldiers, the high priest to his clergy. Praise be to God, who doeth abundantly above all we ask or think!'

<sup>1</sup> The spirit which Theodosius manifested in this case was certainly worthy of his character as a Christian sovereign. We may therefore well believe what Augustine says of him, that he rejoiced more in being a member of the Church than in being the ruler of the world. *Ecclesiæ se membrum esse magis quam in Terris regnare gaudebat* (*Civit. Dei*, lib. v. c. 26).

<sup>2</sup> Where he *sat* would perhaps be more correct; for it was the custom of the age to preach sitting, though Chrysostom, as he kindled, generally rose and stood pale and panting before the audience.

In this simple but solemn exordium he sets out with the thought which was uppermost in the minds and breasts of the people,—namely, the reappearance among them of that venerable individual through whose instrumentality the city was delivered; ‘the wise man,’ whose words were ‘heard in quiet’ more than ‘the cry’ of the civic rulers or of the imperial commissioners; while in the peroration of his discourse he alludes to the reception they gave to Flavian’s messenger when he arrived with the joyful news of the Emperor’s pardon: ‘As ye then did,’ says he, ‘when ye crowned the market with flowers, kindled the lights, covered the streets with tapestry, and celebrated, as it were, the birth-day of a city; as ye did then, do always, but in a different way, crowning not the forum with festive wreaths, but crowning yourselves with moral virtues, kindling the light of good works in your souls, and rejoicing with spiritual gladness. Let us not cease to praise God for the mercy which He hath shown us, and let us confess our great obligations to Him, not only for having warded off the calamities which we dreaded, but also for having permitted them to impend over us. For by both of these dispensations He has conferred a distinction upon our city. Declare these events to your children with prophetic voice; let your children rehearse them to theirs, and they again to the generation succeeding, that all posterity may know the mercy shown by God to this city, may deem us blessed to have enjoyed such signal marks of His beneficence, may venerate Him who has raised a city thus fallen, and may thereby be themselves profited and excited to piety. For the history of these events will not only exercise a beneficial influence upon us, but upon those who come after us.’<sup>1</sup>

His allusion to ‘the distinction which God had conferred upon the city’ was intended to counteract the

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xxi. sec. 4.

sense of humiliation which lay heavy at their hearts, even amid the joy of deliverance. For although the Emperor had spared the town, he felt it right to mark in a special manner his sense of the seditious and scandalous deed which the inhabitants had allowed to be committed. He therefore degraded Antioch from the rank it held as the metropolis of Syria, transferring that dignity to the city of Laodicea. He at the same time ordered the theatre, circus, and public baths to be closed for a whole year, that the people, deprived of their customary amusements, might have more leisure to think of what they had done, and be led to take measures for the reformation of those with whom the riots had originated.

The storm of trial through which Antioch passed at this memorable crisis appears to have had a salutary effect on all classes of the population. In their affliction they sought the Lord, and crowded together to His house, where, as Chrysostom had often told them, they found the only 'quiet haven' in these troublous times. Religious services were kept up every day; and these were accompanied with exposition of the Scriptures, and earnest calls to repentance and amendment, by our fervent and indefatigable presbyter.

He was for many weeks not only the teacher and consoler of the city, but almost the only man in it to whom the people could look with confidence. The amount of thought and care, and day-visiting and night-watching, which came upon him must have been very great; but, like a true servant of Him who 'went about doing good,' he thought no labour too heavy by which the suffering could be relieved, the sinful reclaimed, and the faithful comforted. It was, in fact, a time of spiritual awakening at Antioch; such a time as had not been known in that place since the days of Paul.

Here is the description which he gives of the state of

feeling which prevailed during the period of public alarm : 'We derive no ordinary consolation from the present season,<sup>1</sup> for we daily meet together and rejoice in hearing the divine word. We daily behold each other, and pour forth together our sorrows and our supplications, receiving the common blessing before we return to our homes. All these things lighten our affliction.'<sup>2</sup> 'The forum is empty, but the church is full. If the one is a cause of grief, the other is of devout gladness. When, therefore, you come to the forum, and mourn at the sight of its desolation, fly to your spiritual mother, and she will at once cheer you with the multitude of her children. She will set before you the united band of brethren, and chase away your sorrow. We seek for men in the city as in a desert ; but if we take refuge in the church, we are crushed by the pressure of the crowd.'<sup>3</sup> 'Let us not then, my beloved, grieve because of the terror which we now feel ; but rather give thanks to God for awakening us from our carelessness to greater concern (about our souls). For, tell me, what injury have we sustained from this anxiety and grief? Is it any injury that we have been rendered more thoughtful, more diligent and watchful? Is it any injury that we now meet no man intoxicated, or singing lewd songs ; that the greater portion of those whom we see are either praying or weeping ; that senseless mirth, and light discourse, and licentious behaviour are banished ; so that our city may at last be compared to a modest matron ?'<sup>4</sup> 'How many words have we wasted in admonishing the thoughtless to abandon the theatre and its corrupt shows ! And they would not. They persisted in running to witness the disgraceful exhibitions of the dancers,

<sup>1</sup> It was the season of Lent, as already noticed, when a fast of special severity was observed.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. iv.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, Hom. vi. sec. 1.

who planted down their satanic assembly at the very gates of the house of God, so that their noisy shouts responded to our notes of praise.<sup>1</sup> Lo! now, although we are silent, they have of their own accord closed the orchestra, and the circus is no longer frequented. Our city becomes each day more purified; the lanes, the streets, the market-place, are purged from the infection of loose and frivolous songs. On all sides are heard supplications and benedictions. Tears have succeeded to boisterous mirth, words of wisdom to lascivious jests. The city has become a church; the shops are shut up; the whole day is spent in these public devotions, and all as with one common voice are calling upon God. What reasoning, what counsel, what admonition, what length of time could have effected these things?’

Such was the remarkable change wrought in Antioch during what may be called ‘the Reign of Terror.’ The proud and luxurious queen of the East might now, to use the words of Chrysostom himself, be called ‘a modest matron.’ That course of social reformation which was felt to be so much required was begun in a way he could little have expected. The very classes whose crimes and blasphemies he had so often besought his people to restrain, were at last led by some unseen hand, and brought within the sound of his voice. There, grouped about his pulpit, were those bands of drunkards, swearers, and thieves, who had been the chief instruments in bringing this calamity upon the city, and of whose depraved habits he had so long and so loudly complained. There also he saw gathered around him, in one strangely mingled mass, those pagan unbelievers, Jewish scoffers, and truculent schismatics with whom he had so often to contend. And there, above all, were the crestfallen

<sup>1</sup> This fact shows the influence of the pagan rulers, and the gross indifference of those fashionable members of the Church who shared in their games and festivities.

voluptuaries who built stately houses, spent their Sundays at the theatre, aped the manners of the heathen aristocracy, intrigued for invitations to the parties of the Roman governor, and thought it beneath their dignity to appear in church more than 'once or twice a year.'<sup>1</sup> All these were now seen every day in the sanctuary, prostrate in prayer, joining with trembling voices in the hymns, or listening with wet cheeks to the melting exhortations of the city preacher.

And very tenderly, as well as very wisely and faithfully, did he deal with them at this trying juncture. Though naturally of an austere temper, with a strong tinge of that ascetic spirit which drew him to the desert, yet when he saw the hand of God upon them, and their hearts sorely disquieted within them, he uttered no word of reproach; or, if he alluded to their past failures (as he could not well avoid doing), it was always for the purpose of extracting from them lessons of encouragement and hope. Like Barnabas, who was sent to visit Antioch in the days of the apostles, he proved to be in very deed a 'son of consolation.' In the midst of their affliction he, like that primitive deputy, 'saw the grace of God, and was glad; and exhorted them with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.'

The thoughts of Chrysostom were led back to these apostolic times by all that came under his notice at this period. And we find that he turned the traditions of the Antiochian Church to great account in his efforts to administer comfort to the members of his flock. Some of them felt hurt at the humiliation inflicted on their city by being cast down from its metropolitan rank, and this is the way in which he tried to take the sting out of that wound:—

'Do ye grieve because the dignity of our city hath

<sup>1</sup> Such is the charge made publicly against them by Chrysostom. See chap. viii.

been taken away? Learn, then, what it is that constitutes the dignity of a city, and know, that if the city be not betrayed by its own inhabitants, no one has power to deprive it of its dignity. It is not its rank of metropolis, nor the size and beauty of its buildings, nor the number of its columns, nor its spacious colonnades and public walks, nor its precedence of other cities; but it is the piety of its people. This is the glory, the beauty, the security of a city; and, if destitute of piety, it is of all cities the most degraded, though honours innumerable should be conferred upon it by the Emperors. Would ye know the true dignity of your city, and be made acquainted with its ancestral honours? I will tell you of them; not only that you may know, but that you may likewise emulate them. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. This is an honour no other city in the world enjoys, not even the city of Romulus. Hence Antioch may stand forth before the whole earth, because of this love for Christ, because of this fearless confession of its faith. Would ye learn another distinction of our city? When a great dearth was prophesied, the Christians dwelling at Antioch determined, every man according to his ability, to send relief unto the brethren at Jerusalem. Behold, then, a second distinction—charity towards the distressed. The season restrained them not; the prospect of calamity rendered them not remiss: but at a time when men gather together the stores of others, they freely gave their own; and not to those near, but to those dwelling far off. These are manifestations of faith in God, and love towards our neighbour. Would ye know an additional distinction of our city? Certain men came down to Antioch from Judea, subverting the faith, and introducing Jewish observances. The disciples at Antioch did not submit in silence to this innovation; but, gathering the Church together, they sent Paul and Barna-



bas up to Jerusalem, and caused the apostles to proclaim throughout the world doctrines free from Jewish error. These are the distinctions which constitute the dignity and glory of our city. They render it a metropolis not of earth, but of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

But while the people of Antioch were much impressed, and not a little improved, by the trials through which they had passed, they soon—such, alas, is human nature!—began to fall back into their former ways. Some of them complained grievously of the dulness of the city, the decay of trade, and the low state into which everything had sunk. Such of them as had come under the influence of Chrysostom's teaching, said but little about the loss of their games and theatrical amusements; but they all felt the want of the public baths, which in an Eastern city were not mere luxuries, but things almost necessary to health and comfort. It was therefore about this point that the altered state of public feeling first indicated the turning of the tide. The quick ear of the spiritual watchman soon caught these muttered complaints; and, knowing but too well what they meant, he thus remonstrates with the complainers: 'Not twenty days have elapsed since the baths were closed, and you complain as if you had been deprived of them for a whole year. Say, did you feel so when you dreaded an assault from the soldiers, when every day you stood looking for death? When you rushed away to the deserts, and fled to the tops of the mountains, had any one then proposed to you, to remain a whole year without baths, and to be freed from the terror which overwhelmed you, would you not have joyfully accepted the offer? But now, instead of thanking God, who has permitted all these threatenings to pass over without injuring you, you riot once more in pride and wantonness. And now that your fears have subsided,

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xvii. sec. 2.

you relapse into a forgetfulness of God still greater than that in which you lived before. Have the past events made so little impression upon you, that you long, forsooth, for your baths? And if the baths were opened, should not the misery of the imprisoned be sufficient to make such of their brethren as have escaped the peril, renounce their amusements for a while? Human life is in danger, and you think of your baths, and pursue your pleasures!'<sup>1</sup>

While thus engaged in regulating, where he could not restrain, the current of reaction, one of the most interesting services to which Chrysostom was now called was that of instructing those crowds of converts from among the heathen who had embraced the cause of Christianity. To this some were moved by the Emperor's clemency, which was ascribed to the Christian principles he held, and had the effect of enhancing the value of these principles throughout the whole empire. In Antioch this feeling was deepened by the personal interest of all classes in the placable temper which the Emperor had displayed; while it was still further brought home to them there, by the use the great preacher made of it, and the earnestness with which he sought to impress the fact upon the public mind. With this view he addressed a series of discourses to the heathen population, of which, however, no record has been kept. The only notice we have of them consists in a brief allusion contained in one of the other homilies delivered at the same period. But even from that notice, slight as it is, we may gather that here, as in all the rest of his efforts at this period, he left no means untried, by which the cause of the gospel could be advanced, and the spiritual interests of the community promoted.

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xviii. Some of the rulers and leading men of the city were still in prison, and waiting the Emperor's final sentence of life or death.

Signal, and even wonderful, as Chrysostom's labours were throughout the whole of these transactions, it may be remarked that such services are not in general very much appreciated after the occasion for them has passed away. It is true that they often produce a strong impression at the moment, and that people are apt to talk in admiring terms of some particular discourse by which the attention of a great crowd has been arrested, and their minds powerfully moved. But, looking at the influence of such efforts on a more common and continuous scale, there are but few who seem to understand how important in every sense, social and political as well as religious, are the issues which result from them. These issues, being of an intellectual and moral character, are 'out of sight,' and therefore, as regards the many, 'out of mind.' Beyond the emotions that are evoked while the speaker is engaged in addressing his audience, there is no thought either of the extraordinary amount of moral force by which these emotions have been awakened, or of the beneficial consequences by which they are likely, and in many cases sure, to be followed. While listening for months, or years it may be, to a vital teacher of this stamp—one who is able to get fairly into the inner region of motives, where the springs of moral action are lying bare before him, so that he can work them like the stops of an electric telegraph—how seldom do even the most intelligent of his hearers realize the mighty influence that such a teacher is exerting on the character of the masses that are gathered around him! Think of the false views he is eradicating, the dangerous passions he is counteracting, the secret sins he is bringing up before the startled conscience of the transgressor, and the piercing thrill of horror and dismay he is sending through all the ranks and tribes of corruption. But more than this: Think of the pure light he is imparting, of the high impulses he is originating, of sacred aspirations

he is calling forth, the elevating and commanding motives by which he is raising and purifying the public mind. Nor is this all. Think, further, of the doubts that are dispelled by him, the temptations that are disarmed, the hidden troubles that are relieved, the weak souls that are strengthened, and the wounded hearts that are anointed and healed. Finally, think of the searching breeze of truth which, like 'a mighty rushing wind,' he is sending through all the avenues of social life, drying up 'the miry and the marshy places,' and disinfecting the moral atmosphere all around him. The physician, the lawyer, the party leader, the mere platform orator—those individuals, in short, who deal only or mainly with the *external* interests of society—are highly thought of, and generally well rewarded in some form or another, for such services as they render. But a preacher—a simple preacher, and nothing more—one who 'gives himself wholly' to that work, looking for no recompense beyond the good that he is doing,—such a man is of very little account at this or at any time. And yet there can be no doubt that, as a moral educator and social reformer, one such man in a city is worth all these other outside agencies put together, and doing a work that but few of them can touch, or approach in any shape. He is doing more than the magistrate in repressing crime, more than the physician in keeping down disease, more than the lawyer in composing differences and enforcing the claims of justice ; while he is counteracting at the same time all the crude doctrines and empirical schemes (for they are often little else) that party leaders, platform orators, and the whole race of social experimentalists are labouring to promote, quite as much for their own behoof as for that of the public. A simple, faithful gospel minister, who, like his Master, 'careth for no man,' and 'seeketh not the honour which cometh from men,' but speaks out what he believes to be the truth boldly and fearlessly,

whoever may be offended thereby—ready, if need be, to encounter any amount of public obloquy for the public good—is without question the greatest blessing that God can bestow upon any community. And if, in addition to honesty of purpose and purity of aim, he possesses those powers of utterance that bring large masses of his fellow-men under his influence, the real value of such a man is simply incalculable.

The sentiments we have thus expressed, strange as they may appear to some, are fully borne out by the services of Chrysostom in Antioch at this period. He was, as we have already stated, a student, a man of retiring habits, who, like his apostolic predecessors, 'gave himself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word;' yet, being called forth by the exigencies of the time, he became in a manner the mouth of God to the city—a well-spring of wisdom, and strength, and hope. The whole population, including every class from the highest to the lowest, looked up to this simple presbyter as their trusted counsellor, and their only helper in the day of their calamity. And yet, much as they prized his counsels and profited by his instructions, they did not feel as if they were under any great obligation to him. He was the bishop's assistant, and had done his duty—that was all.<sup>1</sup> They might crown the forum with flowers, and spread carpets on the streets, and kindle their lights<sup>2</sup> to do honour to the messengers

<sup>1</sup> The writer was much struck with an incident illustrative of these remarks, which took his attention in the public prints about a couple of years ago. He observed the name of a clergyman, of whom he had never heard before, figuring in the newspapers at the head of a long list of noblemen and gentlemen, who were collecting a large sum of money (amounting to some thousands) to be presented as a suitable testimonial to the clergyman in question. On inquiring into the cause of this extraordinary outburst of agricultural enthusiasm and public gratitude, he found that it all turned on some improvement which this spiritual seedsman had made on—a reaping machine!

<sup>2</sup> These were lamps suspended over their doors.

who came with despatches from the bishop or the Emperor; but it never occurred to them, and still less probably to Chrysostom himself, that he had done anything that was worthy of special recognition. He had simply laboured night and day for their spiritual welfare; and when the occasion that called him forth to occupy so remarkable a position was over, he withdrew from the public eye to rest his weary head, and to recruit his exhausted strength. 'No one remembered that same poor man,' and his words were, if not 'despised,' at least forgotten. The crowd at the same time withdrew from the church, and the services began to be deserted by the bulk of the congregation, as they had formerly been. The rich voluptuaries opened their houses, brought out their carriages, and resumed their gaieties as before. The mixed multitude of pagans and heretics, brawlers and blasphemers, returned to their old haunts, and many to their old habits again; while Chrysostom, with the faithful portion of the people and a few reclaimed heathens, were very soon left to meet and worship alone in the 'old church' of Antioch. We know of no instance more apt to illustrate the old, old proverb,

'The river past, and God forgotten.'

---

[NOTE.—To give the reader some idea of Chrysostom's labours at this crisis, we may mention some of the homilies he delivered (called those 'on the statues'), in the order in which they are set down by Tillemont, who has bestowed great pains in fixing the dates. According to him, the first was given on the 26th of February, ten days before Lent; the second on 6th March, the eighth day after the insurrection had broken out; the third on the day following, being Sunday the 7th of March; the fourth on Monday the 8th of March; the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth on the successive days of that week, up till Friday the 12th; the ninth on Monday the 15th; the tenth after the lapse of a few days; and so forth. It appears that fifteen of these remarkable homilies were delivered during the single

month of March, and nearly three-fourths of them on successive days ! The arrangement of Fronto Ducæus differs from that of Tillemont down from the tenth, agreeing only as to the nineteenth. Comparing these dates with the character of these discourses, what an idea does it give us of the fulness and the fine cultivation of the preacher's mind, which could pour off such striking and beautiful addresses almost, if not altogether, extemporaneously !]

## XI.

### RURAL BISHOPS OF SYRIA.

'Sublimar in this world know I nothing than a peasant saint, could such note be anywhere met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself. Thou wilt see the splendour of heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness.'—CARLYLE.

CONSIDERING the heavy labours which devolved upon Chrysostom during this period of public calamity, and the severe strain of mind and body necessarily connected with them, we are not surprised to find that his health was so impaired as to prevent him from taking any part in certain festivals which usually followed the celebration of Easter. Although he felt it expedient to conform to the custom of signalizing the leading events in our Saviour's life by public religious services, he was not unaware of the grave objections to which it was liable, and the serious evils, both social and spiritual, with which it was actually attended. In common with Augustine, Jerome, Theodoret, and many more of the leading Fathers, he often took occasion to impress on his hearers that these days ought not to be considered as possessing any peculiar sacredness, and that such an idea savoured rather of Judaism than of Christianity. 'It is a Judaizing notion,' says our preacher, 'to appear before God only three times a year.'<sup>1</sup> He then goes on

<sup>1</sup> The principal festivals of the Eastern Church, as specified by Chrysostom in one of his homilies (*de Beato Philogon*. vi.), were those of Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. Christmas was the last introduced, but it was celebrated in his time. It was only in the latter half of the fourth century, however, that it began to be observed. Neander says the first traces of it appear about A.D. 360.



to explain that, in the case of the Jews, the worship of God was confined to one place, and that therefore the main body of the people could only go thither a few times in the year. But with his hearers it was otherwise; and he therefore reminded them that the whole life of the Christian should be one continued festival. 'God expects that we should always appear before Him.' 'We are commanded constantly to celebrate a feast, for we always have a feast.'

With the view of strengthening his remonstrances, he quotes Paul's statement to the Galatians, as showing that the disposition to 'observe days, and months, and times, and years,' was but 'a turning again to the weak and beggarly elements' of the earlier dispensation, and therefore a proof not of piety, but of carnality. 'At our celebration of the holy Pentecost,' says he, 'so great a multitude will flock hither, that every place here will be crowded. But *I value not such an assemblage*, as custom, not piety, brings them together. For the man who joins this meeting (an ordinary Sunday meeting) with zeal, with earnest desire and soberness of mind, will always frequent it, and not become one of those who only appear (with the crowd) at a festival, and with them depart; suffering himself, after the manner of cattle, to be led along by the herd.'<sup>1</sup>

The motive for introducing this as well as many other unscriptural practices adopted by the early Christians, was the good effect they were supposed to have on the pagan multitude.<sup>2</sup> But any benefit likely to result from them in that way was more than counterbalanced by their influence on the professed members of the Church. The great body of them took up the notion that attendance on the stated festivals, and receiving the sacrament

<sup>1</sup> Hom. de Anna. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Churches that worship the idols of 'the tribe and the den,' and therefore take tradition, not truth, for their guide, still follow this practice.

of the Lord's Supper on these occasions, was all that was necessary for maintaining their Christian profession. We have already seen how deeply this notion had rooted itself in their minds, and how constantly the faithful presbyter of Antioch is protesting against it.

It is a notion, however, which is inseparable from the system ; for, whenever people are taught that they are saved by the sacraments, they will attach but little importance to the ordinary services of the Church. It is in vain such formalists are warned that 'the kingdom of God is *not* meat and drink,' but something more akin to man's spiritual nature. Their sacerdotal instructors, if they do not *tell* them, yet *teach* them, what they feel to be the reverse of this : namely, that grace comes through the body,<sup>1</sup> not through the mind ; that it goes in at the mouth and 'comes out at the draught ;' and they therefore conclude that a periodical purgation at Christmas or at Easter, by means of a bread-pill laid upon the tongue, is quite sufficient to preserve their spiritual health, and to maintain them in the 'odour of sanctity,' even though they may be living in the practice of sin. Hence the light esteem in which scriptural truth and spiritual instruction are held by all those Churches in which the priestly system is established, and the profane contempt with which they talk of the ordinance of preaching, as if the apostle had never said, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Why, even in the Jewish Church the priests

<sup>1</sup> The sacramental theory of grace is but the complement of the monkish and Manichæan theory of sin, which implies that good and evil, life and death, are conveyed through the body. This is a kind of religious materialism, and marks a very low state of spiritual apprehension. Apart from the profane jugglery (worse than the darkest sorceries of the pagan priesthood) of which *they* are guilty who deal in the trade miracle of transubstantiation, the idea of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God 'truly and substantially' (as the Council of Trent defines it), would, if such a monstrous thing were possible in any sense, be a return to the savage orgies of cannibalism.

did not venture to revile the prophets, although the 'burdens' of the latter were often enough discharged upon themselves, as *they*, even more than the people, required these special messengers to hold them in check. But then the Jewish priests were brought up with an abhorrence of heathenism, and did not, like their sacerdotal brethren of modern times, derive the best half of their religion from the old pagans of Antioch and Rome.

The festival of Easter, as we have said, was followed by other celebrations. These were connected together, partly for the purpose of accommodating that portion of the people who came from a distance, and partly to keep up the attendance at church, which, as we have seen, was apt to fall off very suddenly after those periodical absolutions and dispensations were concluded. Among other services peculiar to the season, they had in Antioch a series of meetings and processions in honour of the martyrs, at which Chrysostom was prevented from being present by the state of his health. The bishop, in his absence, discharged all the necessary duties, conducted the people to the tombs of the local saints (the most notable of whom were Ignatius and Babylas<sup>1</sup>), where he delivered addresses, and performed certain religious rites in commemoration of their acts and sufferings. 'In the long period of twelve hundred years,' says Gibbon, 'which elapsed between the reign of Constantine and the reformation of Luther, the worship of saints and relics *corrupted the pure and perfect simplicity of the Christian model*; and some symptoms of degeneracy may be observed even in the first generations which adopted and cherished this *pernicious innovation*. The satisfactory experience that the relics of saints were more valuable than gold or precious stones,

<sup>1</sup> Among Chrysostom's early productions was a *Life of Babylas*, which he wrote while living at the 'desert.'

stimulated the clergy to multiply the treasures of the Church. Without much regard for truth or probability, they invented *names for skeletons, and actions for names*. The fame of the apostles, and of the holy men who had imitated their virtues, was darkened by religious fiction. To the invincible band of genuine and primitive martyrs they added myriads of imaginary heroes, who had never existed except in the fancy of crafty or credulous legendaries; and there is reason to suspect that Tours might not be the only diocese in which the bones of a malefactor were adored instead of those of a saint. A superstitious practice which tended to increase the temptations of fraud and credulity, insensibly extinguished the light of history and of reason in the Christian world.'

Further on he adds: 'The minute particles of these relics, a drop of blood or the scrapings of a bone, were acknowledged in almost every province of the Roman world to possess a divine and miraculous virtue.' Even Augustine was so far led away by the superstition of the times, that he enumerates above seventy miracles wrought by the bones of a martyr, of which three were resurrections from the dead,—all in the space of two years, and within the limits of his own diocese.

Again, speaking of the powers of the saints, this cynical and slashing but clear-headed and keen-sighted historian says: 'The enlargement of their intellectual faculties surpassed the measure of the human imagination; since it was proved by experience that they were capable of hearing and understanding the various petitions of their numerous votaries, who in the *same moment of time*, but in the most *distant parts of the world*, invoked their name and assistance . . . The meaner passions of pride, avarice, and revenge may be deemed unworthy of a celestial breast; yet the saints themselves condescended to testify their grateful approbation

of the liberality of their votaries; and the sharpest bolts of punishment were hurled against those impious wretches who violated their magnificent shrines, or disbelieved their supernatural power.'

He concludes with the following reflection, equally just and profound: 'The imagination which had been raised by a painful effort to the contemplation and worship of the Universal Cause, eagerly embraced such inferior objects of adoration as were more proportioned to its gross conceptions and imperfect faculties. The sublime and simple theology of the primitive Christians was gradually corrupted; and the monarchy of heaven, already clouded by metaphysical subtleties, was degraded by the introduction of a *popular mythology*, which tended to restore the *reign of polytheism*.'<sup>1</sup>

The meetings in honour of the martyrs were succeeded by one of a much more interesting, and certainly of a much less questionable kind. On this occasion, Chrysostom, though yet suffering from illness, appeared again in the pulpit, while he was surrounded by a large body of his rural brethren, who had poured in from all parts of the country to be present at the concluding service of the season. It was the festival commemorative of our Lord's ascension—one which has always held a distinguished place in the ritual of the Greek Church. It appears that such a gathering of the provincial clergy was an event of rare occurrence, and that it therefore excited an unusual degree of interest among the members of the congregation, and throughout the city generally.

These country visitors represent a body of pastors different from any to whom we have yet alluded, and well deserving of our special notice. They may be

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. v. 131-3, edit. 1806. Byron says that Gibbon 'sapped with solemn sneer a solemn creed.' If so, it was not so much the Christianity of the New Testament he 'sapped,' as the 'creed' of the priests. It seems to us that his real attitude has not been rightly understood.

taken as a fair sample of the kind of men to whom the apostles committed the charge of the rural congregations which they had formed in the course of their missionary journeys.

We all know how closely the dwellers in our agricultural districts used to cling to the customs of their fathers, and how slowly changes of any kind worked their way amongst them. This was emphatically the case with the people of the East, among whom we find many tribes perpetuating to this day the identical manners and modes of life that prevailed in the days of the patriarchs. We may therefore conclude with considerable certainty, that the country bishops who appeared in Antioch at this time, differed little, if at all, from those native 'elders' ordained by Paul and Barnabas in their visits to the Churches of Syria.<sup>1</sup>

They were composed of the more intelligent and better-conditioned of the Christian peasantry, by whom they were chosen to the pastoral office. Except as regarded their personal piety and knowledge of the Scriptures, they were substantially on a level with the members of their flocks. Like them, they looked after their own cattle, ploughed their own fields, and supported themselves by the labour of their own hands. As a class, they were without any literary culture, knew nothing of Greek or Latin, and could speak no language but their native Syriac. Their influence depended solely on their religious character, and on the manner in which they

<sup>1</sup> In the course of these visits, we are told that they ordained '*elders* in every church' (Acts xiv. 23). When they came to Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, 'and called the *elders* of the church' (xx. 17). Titus was directed to 'ordain *elders* in every city' (Tit. i. 5). There is not a single text in the Bible in which we read of a bishop either ordaining or being ordained. In the first apostolic council at Jerusalem not one solitary 'bishop' (if any such existed) was present—only '*elders*.' Hence the decrees of that council are called 'the decrees of the apostles and *elders*' (Acts xvi. 4). Where was 'the apostolical episcopate' in these days?

performed the simple and for the most part gratuitous services pertaining to this office. In other respects they were scarcely distinguishable, either in their appearance or habits, from the bulk of their neighbours. The union of these representatives of the rural congregations in common devotion with the cultivated inhabitants of the metropolis, was an event which Christianity alone rendered possible, and therefore deeply impressed the mind of Chrysostom. Hence, although not yet recovered from his illness, he resolved to celebrate this festival with his flock, and to call their attention to the importance of such a union.

After alluding to his illness, and expressing regret at his unavoidable absence from the services previously held, he goes on to say: 'I think the present day to be a great festival indeed,<sup>1</sup> on account of our brethren, who by their presence beautify our city and adorn the church; a people foreign to us in language, but of one voice with us as to the faith; a people living in tranquillity, and having an honest and sober occupation. . . . Each of these men you may see at one time employed in yoking the labouring oxen, and guiding the plough, and cutting the deep furrow; and at another ascending the sacred pulpit, and cultivating the souls of those under his authority: at one time cutting away the thorns from the soil with a bill-hook, at another purging out the sins of the soul by *the word*.'<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the same class of men, he says elsewhere: 'How glorious a sight, to behold the pastor approach after the manner of Abraham, his hairs grey, his loins girded, digging the ground, and working with his own hands! What land so beautiful as his! Debauchery and drunkenness are banished thence; vanity has no

<sup>1</sup> *Vid.* Hom. ad Pop. Antioch. xix., which, according to the superscription, was held the Sunday before Ascension day, which was called *Episomenes*.

<sup>2</sup> Not by the 'wafer,' or bread-pill.

place there. Benevolence shines brighter, on account of the simplicity by which it is surrounded.’<sup>1</sup> This is to our own mind a most exquisite picture, wherein the mingled elements of Arcadian simplicity and apostolic piety are blended together in congenial and beautiful union. And this was the class of patriarchal bishops that was destroyed by the worldly-minded folly of prelatical churchmen!

The interest felt by Chrysostom in the visit of the simple country brethren whom he thus describes, is very characteristic of him. Being himself a man of a singularly natural character, and rendered still more so by the very cultivation which raised him so much above the mere professional ecclesiastics by whom he was surrounded, it is very evident that the presence of these primitive ‘elders’ was a refreshing sight to him. He was fully aware, as we have seen, of their actual apostolic standing as ‘bishops;’ and neither their want of culture nor their rustic appearance would be any disparagement to them in the eyes of one who had for six years of his life enjoyed the company of illiterate monks, having nothing to recommend them but the Christian worth that was in them. It is not at all unlikely, however, that some of the fashionable church-goers at Antioch would be rather amused at the appearance and manners of these episcopal ploughmen, with their sunburnt faces, horny hands, and Syrian dialect. And we think it exceedingly probable that some of the presbyters, if not even *deacons*, of the metropolitan church would be inclined to patronize them, and to make the best apology they could to their city friends for any want of social refinement or professional accomplishments that their rural brethren might display. Such is human, ay, and such is clerical nature too sometimes, especially among that class of drawing-room ecclesiastics in whose eyes

<sup>1</sup> Hom. in Act. Apost. xviii.



character is nothing, and mere manner and costume everything. Hear the recluse of Olney :

'In man or woman, but far most in man,  
And most of all in man *that ministers*  
*And serves the altar*, in my soul I loathe  
All affectation : 'tis my perfect scorn ;  
Object of my implacable disgust.'

That *is a burst!* and especially from such a gentle spirit as Cowper's! But Cowper, if not one of the highest, is yet one of the truest of our poets, possessing all the fine instincts of the race in rare perfection. What would he have thought had he beheld some of those 'apostolic' divines, with whose presence the men of this generation are so familiar, going about in their long surtouts, lavender gloves, and mystical neckties? That, however, is nothing; it is mere foppery in orders—a sort of canonical Beau-Brummelism, that might very soon be laughed out of countenance and out of existence, if the laity were once brought to attend to their spiritual as carefully as they do to their temporal interests. But what would the true-hearted Christian poet have said could he have seen 'the man that ministers and serves the altar' marching into the church in the midst of a group of cross-bearers, 'thurifers,' and choristers, wrapped in gorgeous vestments of silks or satin, stiff with brocade and gold lace, and set off with copes, and scarfs, and chasubles; forgetting that what Ben Jonson calls 'the adulteries of art'<sup>1</sup> were never more out of place than in the house and service of the Holy One? If mere 'affectation' was 'his perfect scorn,' and the 'object of his implacable disgust,' how would he have felt had he lived to witness such a spectacle of histrionic piety and profane mummery as we have thus attempted to describe?

<sup>1</sup> 'Such sweet neglect more taketh me  
Than all *th'* adulteries of art,  
*That strikes mine eyes, but not my heart.'*

Attempted only ; for the thing is such a strange mixture of the ludicrous and the lamentable, that it baffles all description.

Returning from this brief digression, it may be remarked that the class of bishops described by the great preacher of Antioch are no longer to be met with, except perhaps in some rare instances, among the Moravians and the Primitive Methodists. They were, as already noticed, the official descendants of those presbyter bishops whom Paul and his companions had ordained in their missionary journeys through Syria. At that time, and during the whole period that the Church remained under the inspired guidance of the apostles, bishops and presbyters were the same. It is now admitted by all episcopal writers, that both these terms are but different names for the same office.

The force of that admission amounts to this, that there is no *scriptural* warrant for the distinction which has been made between presbyters and bishops ; or, in other words, that the prelatical system did *not* receive the sanction of the apostles, and was, in fact, quite unknown in the apostolic age.

The Greek and Latin Fathers declare this with one consent. Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, and Theophylact may be named among the former ; Jerome, Pseudo-Ambrosius, Hilary of Poitiers, Pelagius, Primasius, and others, among the latter. Some of these men protested loudly against the system in question, as an innovation at once unwarranted and mischievous. Jerome, for example, who was perhaps the most learned of them all, and who passed the greater part of his life in the land of the apostles—that is, in Palestine—is very emphatic in his condemnation of the change itself, as well as of those ambitious bishops by whom it was introduced. Two or three sentences from his writings will be enough to show the light in which this question

was regarded, not only by Jerome himself, but by the most eminent Fathers of the fourth century. We shall confine ourselves to one single passage of his works. In his *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus* (i. 5), he says first, 'A presbyter is the same as a bishop.'<sup>1</sup> Next: 'These things have been brought forward to show that, among the ancients, presbyters and bishops were *the same*.'<sup>2</sup> Again: 'Because at that time they called the *same persons* presbyters and bishops, therefore he (the apostle) spake indifferently of bishops as presbyters.'<sup>3</sup> And again: 'Before, through the instigation of the devil, . . . it was said among the people, "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," the churches were governed by the *joint council of the presbyters*.'<sup>4</sup> Once more: 'So let the bishops know, that it is more by custom than by the actual *appointment of the Lord*, that they are greater than presbyters.'<sup>5</sup> Let it be understood that Jerome in these statements is not so much expressing his own individual sentiments as those of the entire Church at that period. For the kind of episcopacy which had been introduced was known to have been the joint work of designing politicians and worldly-minded ecclesiastics, and was therefore not attempted to be justified as a question of principle.

On what grounds, then, it may be asked, was it introduced? In answer to this, we have to state that the introduction of the hierarchical system is traceable to two distinct sources—one political, and the other sacer-

<sup>1</sup> Idem est ergo presbyter qui episcopus.

<sup>2</sup> Hæc propterea, ut ostenderemus apud veteres eosdem fuisse presbyteros quos et episcopos.

<sup>3</sup> Quia eosdem episcopos illo tempore quos et presbyteros appellabant; propterea indifferenter de episcopis quasi de presbyteris est loquutus.

<sup>4</sup> Antequam diaboli instinctu . . . diceretur in populis, Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollinis, ego autem Cephæ, communi presbyterorum consilio ecclesiæ gubernabantur.

<sup>5</sup> Ita episcopi noverint se magis consuetudine, quam dispositionis Dominicæ veritate, presbyteris esse majores.

dotal. The last preceded the first, and was due mainly to the influence of heathenism on the general mind of the clergy. The pagans had their augurs, their flamens, and their pontiffs, who headed the movement against the Christians, and whose peculiar influence as a sacred corporation, or caste, had for ages been publicly recognised. This gave them a great advantage over their clerical opponents, and set the latter to think of some means by which they might be able to meet and to match it. The remedy was not far to seek, inasmuch as they found it ready made to their hand in the constitution of the Old Testament Church. Here they had a kind of ruling pontiff, girt round with an imposing array of priests and Levites. In order, therefore, to accomplish the change they desired, all they had to do was to ascend from the synagogue to the temple—from the simple ritual of the provinces, to the grander and more aristocratic forms of the Jewish metropolis. It is true that that system of ‘carnal ordinances,’ as the apostle calls it, had been expressly abolished, and another and totally different system established in its room,—a system suited to the character of Christianity as a religion of spiritual truths, not one of typical ceremonies and sacrificial rites. Overlooking this vital difference between the two covenants, and ‘the ordinances of service’ by which they were marked out from each other, the clergy of the second and third centuries gradually fell back on the Levitical dispensation, as containing that sacerdotal and aristocratic element which they wanted, and which would enable them to cope with their pagan rivals in their own line. In this way it was that the priestly element was first imported into the Christian sanctuary ; and to that cause, *more than to all others put together*, may be traced the first and most fundamental departure from ‘the truth as it is in Jesus,’ together with all the sad and fearful corruptions by which its action

has been marked both in the Eastern and Western Churches.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of Him who was 'meek and lowly in heart,' who was 'rich, yet for our sake became poor,' passed to a large extent out of the once hallowed enclosure, which now became infested by a set of Judaizing ceremonialists on the one hand, and by a body of pompous, scheming, self-seeking ecclesiastics on the other. Constantine found this system in operation; and when he established Christianity as the religion of the State, all he had to do was to fasten it down more fully on the growing constitution of the Church, by giving political effect to the half-pagan, half-Jewish organization which the clergy as a body had previously adopted. The presbyter of the synagogue was dispossessed and degraded, and the aristocratic ruler of the temple was set over him under the name of a 'bishop' or chief priest.

The Church of Rome has carried out this idea logically and consistently. She has not only taken the framework of the system, but also the crowning and most essential part of it. Under the Old Testament, the high priest was, in fact, the *only* official mediator. He alone had access to the mercy-seat. The other members of the priesthood had none. They were as completely excluded from the inner sanctuary as the Levites or the people. Hence the Church of Leo and Hildebrand has, we say, acted consistently in retaining

<sup>1</sup> We do not say that this was the only cause which led to the introduction of the hierarchical system, though it was evidently one of the first *moving* causes. It was established very gradually, and therefore very quietly. The primary step was the appointment of a chairman, or president, at ecclesiastical meetings to keep order. The senior elder was at first chosen to this office under the name of president. As heresies began to creep into the Church, the president was in some cases suspected of unsoundness; and hence the office, instead of standing on the principle of seniority, began to be elective, the presbyters claiming the right of choosing their president, who by that time had come to be called '*the* bishop,' or ruling head of the council of presbyters.

the office of pontiff or high priest ; while the Church of England, by not doing so, has made herself a mere decapitated trunk, a body without a head, and, what is of far graver consequence, a priesthood without a single mediator ! Looking at the interesting class of men who are held up to our view as in a luminous transparency by the great preacher of Antioch, there are two things that our readers ought carefully to mark. These are, first, the apostolic descent of congregational as distinguished from *diocesan* bishops ; and next, the way in which this primitive order came to be set aside. The *provincial* pastors even down to the fourth century, and for some time beyond it, were still known indiscriminately by the name of bishops or presbyters. Sometimes they were called by the one title, and sometimes by the other, as was the admitted rule in the days of the apostles. It is true that, in the course of the third and fourth centuries, those country pastors who happened to have more than one congregation under their charge, began, like their city brethren, to assume the name of *bishop*, leaving that of *presbyter* to any subordinate helpers who might be employed by them, or otherwise labouring in their districts. These cases, however, were comparatively rare, and existed chiefly in the neighbourhood of large towns. But, with such exceptions, the pastors of *single* congregations throughout the country parts generally, and even in many of the largest cities, such as Antioch itself, continued to be called by the name of ‘bishops,’ despite of many efforts on the part of High Church ecclesiastics<sup>1</sup> (by edicts of councils and otherwise) to alter the practice in favour of their own prelatical views.

It is also to be noted, in connection with this point, that those who were called by the name of ‘presbyters’ in the larger cities of the empire, and who were thus

<sup>1</sup> For there was such a class *then* as there is now.

distinguished from the bishops, had *no congregations of their own*. They were only assistants to the actual pastor or 'overseer.' Thus there was but one central place of worship at Antioch<sup>1</sup> under the spiritual superintendence of Flavian, though there were several presbyters connected with it, who were called by that name because they had not the pastoral oversight of the flock, but acted simply as 'fellow-helpers' to the only real minister and responsible supervisor of the congregation. It was exactly the same in what is called 'the capital of the Christian world'—that is, the city of Rome. Up to the beginning of the fourth century, there was but *one* congregation and *one* overseer there, who was assisted by a number of presbyters.

The only city which had been subdivided into districts, with separate churches and congregations, before that date, was Alexandria, which, from the immense number of Jews residing in it, was led to follow that course, in imitation of the synagogue system, previously and for long established there. It was not, however, till the third century that the system in question began to be adopted even in Alexandria. It is clear, therefore—as clear as history can make it—that diocesan episcopacy, as at present understood, had no existence beyond the single city now mentioned, till the fourth and fifth centuries. It is true that Constantine had organized a scheme of this kind, by giving the bishops of the principal towns a right of supervision over the country districts that were subject to, or civilly connected with, these towns. The effect of that arrangement, however, was, that the city bishop occupied the position of a metropolitan. He was a bishop placed over bishops. But even then the presbyters of the large towns were mini-

<sup>1</sup> The other congregation was set up in opposition to this, and was regarded as an anomaly, which the Council of Constantinople sought to do away with in the way already noticed.

sters *without charges of their own*—men who held the position of councillors and co-operating assistants to the city pastors, and were all connected with the *one* and the same congregation. Every minister who *had a separate charge of his own*, whether *in town or country*, was recognised as a bishop.

We have already seen that there were at least two, if not *three*, such bishops stationed together in Antioch. It is therefore undeniable that the successors of the apostles for three centuries at least were presbyter bishops, not diocesan prelates.<sup>1</sup>

To prevent confusion at this point, it is proper to observe, that before the close of the first century we can discover traces of an arrangement, so obviously necessary that it must have existed in some form or other from the very outset. The arrangement to which we refer is the appointment of a moderator or chairman at the meetings of the clergy. We accordingly find that the person who occupied this position was called at first by the title of president. There is no reason to suppose that the office in question was confined at the beginning to any one presbyter in particular, although it appears to have gone by seniority as a rule. Gibbon says that these presidents were 'considered only as the first of their equals, and the honourable servants of a free people.'<sup>2</sup> Whenever the chair became vacant by death, 'a new president was chosen among the presbyters, by the suffrage of the whole congregation, every member

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to notice the way in which the Oxford translators of Chrysostom's works, including Newman, Pusey, Keble, with other leaders of that party, deal with the case of those Syrian bishops. Strange as it looks, they pass it over in silence; and, as if to prevent inquiry, they refer to these bishops by the odd name of 'rurals'—that is, in their *own* notes and headings. Of course, in translating Chrysostom, they are obliged to make use of *his* words, and to call them 'bishops.' The case is instructive.

<sup>2</sup> *Decline and Fall*, c. xv. p. 53, Bohn's edit.



of which supposed himself invested with a sacerdotal character.'<sup>1</sup>

From what Chrysostom states regarding the country bishops, of whose simple habits he has given us such graphic pictures, we may easily suppose that the rulers of the city congregations would have no great difficulty in reducing themselves and their humble flocks to a state of complete subjection to their own authority. With this view, the first thing they did was to deprive them of the right of ordination, under the pretext that they had in some cases ordained unworthy or unsuitable men. A proposal to that effect was moved and carried at the Council of Laodicea, and the decision there come to was affirmed soon afterwards by the Council of Sardica. The reason assigned in both cases was, 'that the name and authority of the bishops should not be degraded.'<sup>2</sup> The next step they took, and the only one now necessary, was to get some of their city presbyters chosen to these country charges as they fell vacant. The men thus recommended, being also mainly supported by the city bishops out of ecclesiastical funds placed at their disposal, were of course quite willing to retain the name of presbyter, and leave the episcopal title to their metropolitan patrons. Such were the means by which the prelatical system was established, and the *apostolical* overthrown. It was a game of selfish assumption, heartless usurpation, and unhallowed ambition, from first to last.

<sup>1</sup> Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? (Tertul. c. 7). Tertullian believed in the universal priesthood of *Christians*, not of *clerics*.

<sup>2</sup> Concil. Laodicea, c. 57; Concil. Sardic. c. 6. This proves, first, that the country bishops, or presbyters, *had been accustomed* to exercise the right of ordination; and it proves next, that the persons ordained by them were also called 'bishops:' otherwise, how could there be any fear of such persons 'degrading' the episcopal order?

[NOTE.—Some of the advocates of the episcopal system quote from the works of the Fathers lists of ‘bishops’ from the days of the apostles downwards, with the view of proving that prelacy was of apostolic origin. Now they themselves admit that in the time of the apostles, bishop and presbyter were ‘but different names for the same office ;’ and they must therefore be quite well aware that such lists prove nothing as to the point in debate. They know, however, that in the *popular* apprehension the office of a bishop is quite distinct from that of a presbyter. Hence the only effect of referring to these lists, and getting elaborate tables made out by Mr. Fynes Clinton and others, is (of course not intentionally) *to deceive the public*, by leading them to suppose that bishops and presbyters were *not* different names for the same office. ‘I hold *cheating with words*,’ says an ingenious writer of our day,<sup>1</sup> ‘to be in all respects more wicked, as well as more mischievous, than *cheating with cards*.’ We can only say that we quite agree with him.]

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. F. M. Maurice.

## XII.

### CALL TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

*' Tell men of high condition  
That rule affairs of state—  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice—only hate.  
And if they once reply,  
Then gibe them all the lie.'*

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

THE visit of the rural bishops was the last event of any historical importance that occurred before Chrysostom's removal from Antioch. He had laboured there for the space of twelve years in the subordinate position of a presbyter, enjoying the friendship and confidence of his bishop, the warm regard of the best portion of the people, along with the admiration and esteem of the general community.

He was not, however, the sort of person to be spoken well of by all men. He had a character of his own, full indeed of generous sympathies and noble aspirations, but regulated by a sense of duty strict even to sternness, and upheld by a degree of moral courage that nothing could daunt. He had learnt in 'the desert' to look upon life with the eye of an ascetic; and although this feeling became gradually softened as years grew upon him, yet the root of it lay deep in his nature, and constituted one of the shaping elements of his professional career. Of riches, and honours, and all the ordinary baits of human ambition, he had formed the same estimate that was common among the monks of his day; regarding them as comparative trifles, if not treacherous lures, such as no wise man should covet, and for which

at least it was not worth his while to contend. Had he not been a Christian, had not the grace of God laid hold of him, the probability is that he would have turned out like one of those great moral Stoics of whom we read in the pages of Plutarch. Considering, however, the manner of man he was, we may easily imagine that his course could not be a very smooth one in the midst of a frivolous and luxurious population like that of Antioch. Indeed the wonder is that he remained there so long, and worked on so quietly as he did. It says not a little for his Christian discretion and self-control, that, with his fiery temper and fearless tongue, he was able to maintain his position for such a length of time. It is clear that the weight of character which he derived both from his intellectual and spiritual attainments, must have been accompanied with a large mixture of natural gentleness and human kindness; otherwise it would be impossible for one of his world-sifting qualities to have carried out his ministry with any measure of comfort in so dissolute a place as the capital of Syria. Such a man is set up for 'the fall and rising again of many.' As he moves through the crowd, he unconsciously and unintentionally tests his fellows on every side. While all who sympathize with the right and the true are drawn towards him by a sort of 'elective affinity,' he becomes, like his Master, 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence' to the foolish and the disobedient. Even the stronger and more awful statement made by that Master, and verified so signally in His own experience, is also fulfilled to a certain extent in the case of a follower like Chrysostom: 'Whosoever falleth on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.' It is a great privilege to enjoy the ministry, or even the personal acquaintance, of an individual of this stamp, if we have discernment enough to understand so as not to stumble

1

against him. If not, it is the most perilous thing that can happen to us,—a thing that will not only give a severe shock to our moral instincts, but may shatter our entire moral nature to pieces. Such was something like the effect of Chrysostom's ministry in Antioch. To a large number it proved 'a savour of life unto life.' It was the means of quickening and elevating the whole tone of their thoughts; so that they longed for the coming of the Lord's day, and felt their faith revived, and their spiritual vigour renewed, as they listened to the inspiring, feeding, and purifying lessons that flowed from his tongue. They could say on such an occasion :

'When one who holds communion with the skies,  
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,  
And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings :  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.'

It was, however, different with others, especially with the gay and fashionable portion of the audience. His discourses were much too clear, too searching, too discriminating for them. He made them feel that 'the word of the Lord was quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;' and seeing that they were wedded to their sins, and resolved not to give them up, they were of course angry with him who forced such unpleasant reflections upon them, and would not let them alone. They would, no doubt, be drawing invidious comparisons between his preaching and that of the bishop, who did not at all disturb them in the same way, and who, if not quite so eloquent, was in their opinion a far more refined and cultivated preacher. As to the refinement, that perhaps might be doubted, or rather, there is no doubt at all that the bishop (excellent man though he was) was infinitely inferior, both in moral and intellectual culture, to his presbyter-assistant.

They, of course, thought Flavian's preaching more 'refined,' because they could listen to it or not, just as they pleased, never feeling either the better or the worse for it; whereas they could not do that in the case of Chrysostom. They were obliged to listen to him; they could not help themselves. Even though they would fain shut their eyes, and their ears, to save their feelings, it defied them to do it. In spite of all their efforts to the contrary, they strained these organs to a much greater extent than usual, in order to catch every sound of his voice, every muscle of his face, and every movement of his fingers; while they felt, at the same time, as if their sensibilities were roused into a state of preternatural acuteness, so that the words—the sharp, clear, ringing words—that he uttered, seemed to press into their very flesh like the point of a spear.

The whole difference between the bishop and the presbyter lay in this, that the former played gently on the surface of their minds, and therefore never touched or displaced for a moment their usual trains of thought. They could hear all he had to say with great satisfaction, and even enjoy the solemnity of his manner and the episcopal dignity of his tones, thinking all the better of themselves, as well as of him, because they were able to do so. But the other not only 'excited' them, but put all their ordinary ideas to the rout, and compelled them, whether they would or not, to think *his* thoughts and see themselves, for the time at least, as *he* saw them. Now all this was very disagreeable; and therefore, whatever others might say, they did not like his preaching, and would not go to hear him except when they could not help it. It was all very well for the common people to get into raptures, and clap their hands at him; but, as for them, they could not abide him. He was so rude, so boisterous, and wanted grace and polish so much.

We are here trying to give our readers the criticism, or perhaps we should call it the private opinion, of one of the fine ladies of Antioch,—an opinion endorsed, with a great many slang expletives, by that bright youth her brother, and quite concurred in by the ‘curled Assyrian bull,’ their venerable governor. It is not at all unlikely that similar opinions may be entertained, and sometimes expressed, by the same class of persons at the present day.

But, however that may be it seems that our city preacher, followed and admired as he was by the people of Antioch, had foes as well as friends amongst them. ‘By attacking,’ says Neander, ‘the prevalent vices of all classes, he had indeed rendered many his enemies, who were offended by the voice of truth ; but all those who were not totally hardened against religious impressions adhered to him with the inmost affection. The love of the greatest part of his congregation, and the friendship of his bishop, ensured his personal safety ; and those who were dissatisfied with his zeal, which the fear of men could not restrain, had not the power to injure him. In the subordinate situation which he held as presbyter, he could not have come into nearer contact with the powerful either of the secular or ecclesiastical states, and he might thus have continued his blessed ministry peacefully to the end of his days. But a combatant for the kingdom of God, armed with such qualities as he possessed, was not destined to stand in the background, but was to be brought forward to the front of the contest. The treasure which the Holy Spirit had deposited in the enlightened soul would not have thus manifested itself, had not Providence called him to a more elevated and dangerous sphere.’

The sphere of which Neander speaks was Constantinople, to the archbishopric of which city he was recommended by Eutropius, principal chamberlain and prime

minister at the imperial court. This is the same individual who was sent by Theodosius to consult John of Lycopolis before he entered on the great war by which he had recovered for his dynasty the sovereignty of the world. Since then the conqueror of the West had succumbed to the great conqueror of all, and was succeeded by his two sons Arcadius and Honorius,—the first reigning over the eastern, and the second over the western division of the empire. The services of Eutropius had been transferred to the former, who raised him to greater power than he had ever before possessed, loading him with honours and offices which turned his head, and proved fatal to him in the end. This, however, belongs to a later stage of our story. In the meantime it is enough to say, that the imperial favourite through whose influence the presbyter of Antioch was promoted to the see of Constantinople, had in one of his journeys to Syria heard Chrysostom preach, and was so much struck with his eloquence and zeal, that he resolved, as soon as an opportunity occurred, to have him removed to the Eastern capital. The diocese having at last become vacant through the death of Nectarius, the appointment was offered to Chrysostom. It would seem, however, that, splendid as the position was (being only, if at all, inferior to Rome), he had some hesitation as to accepting it. For this many reasons might be assigned, apart from his known dislike to high offices of that kind. The student of the desert-cave had but little inclination to occupy a metropolitan throne; and besides, it very often happens that those who have the power of *persuading*, do not care so much as others for the mere power of *ruling*—the latter being a descent from the former; just as the empire of the heart is a much nobler one than the empire of the hand or the will. Along with this private objection, it appears that the competition for this great office was something enormous. Every



man of note throughout the Church was spoken of, and a vast number of clerical aspirants from all parts of the empire were said to be looking after it, and making interest for it. The whole ecclesiastical ant-hill was in motion ; its industrious denizens rushing towards the tempting crumb which had come within their vision, and tumbling over each other in their eagerness to get at it. It was this that enabled Eutropius to secure it for the man of his choice. The people, who had a certain voice in the matter, became utterly distracted among the multitude of candidates who were besieging them for their votes. Hence the imperial chamberlain, bringing the influence of the court to bear upon them at this crisis, had but little difficulty in persuading them to fix upon one whose fame as a preacher had by that time gone out through all the world ; and accordingly John of Antioch was, by universal consent, elected Primate of the imperial diocese.

But while the said John was among the few who had no thought of such a thing, and no ambition for such a post, he was not less perplexed than astonished when informed of his election. That a simple presbyter should be chosen before all the rich and powerful bishops who were struggling to gain such a prize as the imperial see, was in itself far from being a comfortable reflection. Chrysostom knew well the danger of being 'envied by his neighbours,' and especially by his clerical brethren. He who had preached on almost every part of the Bible, had very probably meditated, if he had not actually discoursed, on that text, 'Who can stand before envy?' At any rate, he could not fail to see that the preference given to him on this occasion would be sufficient to draw a whole host of enemies upon him. The fear of man, however, was not one of his infirmities ; and although he could not overlook the danger we have mentioned, or leave it out of his calculations, we do not

suppose it influenced his mind very much after all. And yet it was out of sight the most dangerous element connected with the case. This he found out to his cost; for it became ultimately the main cause of his deposition, banishment, and death. If the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, the wrath of envious ecclesiastics is crushing. One of our old poets tells us that

‘Ambition is a vulture vile,  
That feedeth on the heart of pride,  
And finds no rest when all is tried.  
For worlds cannot confine the one,  
The other lists and bounds hath none;  
And both subvert the mind, the state,  
Procure detraction, envy, hate.’<sup>1</sup>

It was certainly not Chrysostom's own pride or ambition that ‘procured’ such consequences so far as he was concerned,—for he seems to have shown not much of either,—but that of certain of his disappointed rivals. Not to anticipate, however, suffice it to say that he felt so unwilling to leave his work at Antioch, and so doubtful as to his duty in the whole matter, that Eutropius was obliged to have recourse to a little friendly stratagem to get him up to Constantinople. ‘Towards the end of the year A.D. 397,’ says Neander, ‘every preparation being previously made, he was enticed out of the city of Antioch under a false pretext, in order to forestall his refusal, and prevent the disorders which his congregation, who were so attached to him, might raise, and he was sent to Constantinople.’<sup>2</sup> Milman's account is, that ‘he is said to have been transported almost by force.’<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, with his usual accuracy and felicity of detail, states that ‘a private order was despatched to the governor of Syria; and as the people might be unwilling to resign their favourite preacher, he was trans-

<sup>1</sup> Daniel.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Chrysost.* p. 417, Stapleton's transl.

<sup>3</sup> Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 217.

ported with speed and secrecy in a post-chariot from Antioch to Constantinople. The unanimous and unsolicited consent,' he adds, 'of the court, the clergy, and the people, ratified the choice of the minister; and both as a saint and as an orator, the new archbishop surpassed the sanguine expectations of the public.'<sup>1</sup>

The field of labour to which he was thus brought, more by the zeal of others than by any will of his own, he found by no means in a very satisfactory state. To give our readers some idea of this, we shall require to glance for a moment at the history of his two immediate predecessors. The first of these was Gregory of Nazianzen, who came to Constantinople at the call of the only orthodox congregation existing there at the time. The principles of Arianism had been so strongly supported by Valens and Constantius, that the party adhering to the sound, or Nicene, doctrine had been all but extinguished. Gregory, who was then living in retirement at Seleucia, was invited by this small remnant to become their pastor; and he, hoping to be of service in restoring the cause of evangelical truth in the Eastern capital, accepted their invitation. For such a position he was peculiarly well qualified. Besides being an accomplished scholar and trained rhetorician, he was also thoroughly versed in dogmatic theology. Indeed, such was the practised skill with which he controverted the views of the Arian party, especially in a series of five discourses which were preached and published at Constantinople, that he acquired the surname of '*The Divine*.'<sup>2</sup> He was far, however, from being a mere theologian. There is abundant evidence to show that he laboured strenuously to promote the interests of prac-

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. v. p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Θεολογος, the same as the title of the received version of 'the Revelation of St. John the Divine.' Gregory's rhetorical taste was too apparent, however, both in his style and manner. He had not, like Chrysostom, the skill *arte celare artem*.

tical godliness throughout the city at large, and that his efforts were attended with some considerable measure of success. The career of this excellent though somewhat eccentric individual was marked by many changes. Whether it arose from adverse circumstances, or infirmity of purpose on his own part, his professional life was rather of an unsettled character. His father, of the same name with himself, was Bishop of Nazianzum, in Cappadocia, where he died A.D. 374, in the hundredth year of his age and forty-fifth of his ministry. By him Gregory was ordained to the office of presbyter; and it appears that he laboured for a time as assistant under him in his native place.

Gregory's services at Constantinople were the most sustained and the most successful of all his professional labours. There he had to struggle with many difficulties, especially at the outset; and it was not till the accession of Theodosius that he attained to a position which enabled him to bring his zeal and talents to bear with effect on the general body of the population. Till then Arianism was the popular and prevailing creed. The Cathedral of St. Sophia, and all the churches of the city, were in the hands of these heretics, together with the whole of the public endowments provided for the support of religion; so that the body of orthodox Christians to whom Gregory ministered formed, in comparison, but a feeble and insignificant sect. They held their meetings at first in the hall of a private house belonging to a kinsman of Gregory's. But in the course of time, as the cause advanced and the congregation increased, they were in circumstances to purchase these premises, and to erect a handsome church on the spot. This church they called by the name of *Anastasia*, to commemorate the resurrection of the true doctrine of our Lord's divinity.

It was while this struggle was going on that Theodo-

sus succeeded to the imperial throne,—an event which soon turned the tide against the hitherto dominant party. For this Emperor was as zealous on the side of the orthodox as his predecessors had been on the side of the heretics; and he followed but too closely the persecuting system which they had pursued. When he came to Constantinople, he found the only class of Christian worshippers with whom he sympathized holding their meetings in a private house, while the Arian Bishop Demophilus was ruling in state over all the churches of the capital. With his wonted decision, he called on this dignitary either to subscribe the Nicene Creed, or to resign his charge and retire from the city. To his credit be it said, Demophilus chose the latter alternative. He demitted his charge, withdrew from the place, and from that time forth the Arians worshipped without the walls of Constantinople, until the sixth century.<sup>1</sup>

One would be more disposed to regret the treatment these heretics met with, had they not acted so much in the same spirit themselves. The manner in which they persecuted Gregory was equally cruel and disgraceful. Not contented with misrepresenting the doctrines he taught (for they accused him of maintaining that there were three distinct and equal Deities), they broke into his humble meeting-house, assailed his congregation with sticks, and stones, and firebrands, killing one of them in the affray. Besides all this, they dragged him before the magistrate as the cause of those disturbances they had themselves created; and it is even alleged that they hired an assassin to murder him.

In consequence, however, of the sudden turn which matters had thus taken, Gregory found himself raised

<sup>1</sup> The case of Demophilus was quite an exception to the general rule. The Arians, as a body, gave no trouble to the Emperor. They accepted his creed, and kept their livings!

from being the pastor of a handful of people to be the bishop of the imperial see. He was at once promoted from the private hall of Anastasia to the magnificent Cathedral of St. Sophia, with all the influence and patronage attached to the metropolitan primacy. In order to give greater *éclat* to the victory of truth over error, and to impress the fact more deeply on the public mind, Theodosius resolved to have Gregory installed into his new office, with all the honours that state power and state pageantry could throw around it. With this view, Meletius of Antioch, a private friend of Gregory's (and an early friend of Chrysostom's too, as we have seen), was asked to preside at the installation. The Emperor, surrounded by the ministers and nobles of his court, and attended by the imperial body-guard, conducted the new bishop through the streets of the capital to the Church of St. Sophia, and with his own hand seated him on the archiepiscopal throne.

Just as this part of the ceremony was proceeding, the sky became suddenly overcast, and the assembled worshippers were wrapped in something like darkness at noonday. The Arians shook their heads and shuddered (or perhaps rejoiced), as they beheld the threatening omen. It was a sign of Heaven's displeasure against those who had so cruelly maltreated *them*. But while they were yet engaged in speculating on the issue of this alarming occurrence, lo! the dark cloud passed away, the Cathedral of St. Sophia was flooded with sunshine, and the silvery tones of Meletius were heard foretelling the happy issues of that day.

These issues, if not quite so dark as the defeated party might desire, were by no means so bright as the triumphant Trinitarians, and more especially, as the newly-inducted archbishop, had reason to expect. His elevation was, no doubt, great and sudden; but it came unsought, so far as he was concerned. It was but a day

of small things for himself and the cause he had espoused when he first went to the aid of his oppressed and persecuted friends at Constantinople ; and it was admitted by all parties that he had not only laboured with much zeal and self-denial, but also with the most commendable discretion, in the face of many discouragements. And when he found himself so unexpectedly raised to the high position to which the head of the State thought him so well entitled, he had no cause to anticipate any objection on the part of his clerical brethren. It is true that he was animated by a different spirit from the most of them. He was a scholar and a poet. His tastes were literary, not ecclesiastical. Instead, therefore, of confining his attention to the barren field of Church politics, he turned his thoughts to the richer pastures of ancient literature and scriptural theology. According to Neander, 'he distinguished himself from other impatient, violent bishops who abandoned themselves to the impulses of an intemperate zeal, by uniting moderation with zeal for pure doctrine, and by shaming his passionate and fanatical enemies through his own gentleness and forbearance. It is also the merit of Gregory that he did not, like other Church teachers of this period, who had been drawn into the field of controversy, forget, in his zeal for those views of doctrine which he had found to be correct, that the essence of Christianity does not consist in speculative notions, but in the life ; that he did not suffer himself to be misled by an exclusive zeal for orthodoxy of conceptions, and the neglect of practical Christianity.'<sup>1</sup>

From this it will be seen that Gregory had many points of character in common with Chrysostom. They were both men of classical tastes, addicted to studious habits, and more concerned for the advancement of pure religion than for the attainment of personal or party

<sup>1</sup> *General Church History*, vol. iv. p. 98.

ends. In these respects they belonged to a race of clergymen, rare at that period, and never perhaps very numerous, though most certainly the highest race of all.<sup>1</sup> The great bulk of their brethren were persons of a very different description; many of them, we are bound in charity to believe, sincerely concerned for the interests of the Church and the cause of sound doctrine, but seeking to secure these objects by ways and means of which men like Gregory and Chrysostom could never cordially approve, though they might often for the sake of peace find themselves obliged to go with them, or at least not to oppose them. The weapons commonly used by this class are rather of an external and political than of a purely moral kind. Church leaders, in short, are always more or less Church lawyers, and are apt to become tainted with those mental vices of which legal practitioners are sometimes accused. As a body, they rely more upon precedents than upon principles—on the persuasion of power than on the power of persuasion; and are, as a general rule, much more noted for ‘the wisdom of the serpent’ than ‘the harmlessness of the dove.’ They might object to be called ‘worldly men,’ but yet they are essentially ‘men of the world;’ and the most of them would feel rather flattered than otherwise to be so considered. Their great ambition is to *rule*; and as the readiest means of doing so, they study the laws of the Church, the logic of expediency, and the tactics of party, with all the other (not very ‘fine’)

<sup>1</sup> ‘Had Gregory not been famous as an orator and theologian, he would probably have been better known as a poet. He had a genuine vein of poetry. His poems amount to one hundred and forty, besides two hundred and twenty-eight epigrams and short pieces.’ ‘His prose works consist of fifty orations or addresses, and two hundred and fifty letters. Simeon Metaphrastes describes him as of middle height, pale complexion, and sweet and bland expression. His hair, in his latter years, was of silvery whiteness; his beard short and bushy; his nose was flat, and his eyebrows were prominent.’ See Wilson’s *Popular Preachers of the Ancient Church*, pp. 232–5,—an interesting and scholarly work,



arts by which superiors may be conciliated, rivals defeated, and authority secured. There are undoubtedly individuals among them who rise to influence by the legitimate force of their talents, or by the weight of their moral wisdom ; but such instances, frequent in the State, are very uncommon in the Church, where those who take the lead are generally 'business men,' as they are called, that is, men of management and address, such as we find at the head of our municipal councils, public companies, and great commercial schemes. In other words, they consist, not exclusively but very generally, of the most pushing, intriguing, and power-loving of the clergy.

Gregory was not long in office till he found himself surrounded by Church politicians of this stamp. From the nature of his position, he was expected, and indeed in some sense *obliged*, to take a leading part in the public affairs of the Church ; but before he had time to do much in that way, he was caught in the toils of these active schemers, and hopelessly entangled in their party intrigues. His peace was gone ; and 'disgusted,' as Neander tells us, 'at seeing his colleagues sacrifice in this way the good of the Church to their private passions, he withdrew himself entirely from public transactions, vitiated by so many impure motives.' That was a fatal step. These men desired nothing better than to have the field left to themselves, and to get rid of the presence of such a Marplot as the archbishop of the imperial diocese. Gregory soon discovered his mistake by a conspiracy which they had speedily set on foot, and of which he was himself the selected victim. He found, in fact, that they were laying their heads together to dispost him, seeing that at an early period of his life he had been appointed Bishop of Sasima, a remote place to which he was chosen, but from which he had very soon retired. Now there was an old rule against the translation of bishops, which these astute

leaders had hunted up ; and although it had fallen into disuse, they saw that it was quite sufficient for their purpose. It was 'a law of the Church'—what could be better than that? On this ground they soon got up a very serious case against Gregory, and raised a disturbance which spread in a short time through the city and the whole province.<sup>1</sup> The matter so far was skilfully managed ; for they knew that, whatever the merits of the case might be, the mere fact of such a noise being made about him was quite enough to damage the influence of the archbishop, and would help materially to promote the end they had in view. Poor Gregory, worried by their caballings till he was fairly worn out, was led to commit a second blunder by offering to resign his office. He was ready, he said, 'like Jonah, to sacrifice himself for the ship of the Church.' Contrary to his own expectation and that of his friends, the offer was immediately caught at. Even the Emperor, cajoled by the artifices which were brought to bear upon him, did not interfere, as he should have done, to prevent this act of gross injustice ; but suffered the laborious minister and faithful man, whom his own hand had placed in the metropolitan chair, to be thrust out of it by a set of jealous and vicious rivals. It was while the Council of Constantinople was sitting that these transactions took place.<sup>2</sup> This council was attended by a hundred and fifty bishops ; and the only satisfaction that Gregory got before retiring from the scene of his successful struggles with the enemies of the truth, but unsuccessful conflict with its avowed friends, was that of being permitted to deliver a farewell discourse to this 'assembly of

<sup>1</sup> It was by the Egyptian bishops that this faction was headed ; and we are strongly inclined to suspect that Theophilus of Alexandria, who acted as their leader, was at the bottom of this, as he was of most of the other ecclesiastical conspiracies of the time. Verily 'one sinner destroyeth much good.'

<sup>2</sup> Called the second Œcumenical Council, which met A.D. 381.

treacherous men,' as Jeremiah would very probably have called them. In that discourse he dealt many a shrewd blow at the class of pharisaical dogmatists and self-interested partisans by whom the Church was so sadly infested and so seriously disturbed.<sup>1</sup>

If any of those who were active in enforcing the law of the Church against Gregory, expected, in spite of that law, to get the vacant office, they were disappointed ; for one of the senators of the city was chosen to fill it. The name of this individual was Nectarius ; and the chief reason for which he was selected was the social position he occupied, and which was supposed to render the appointment more acceptable to the court. As to religious qualifications, he appears to have had none. So destitute was he of any decent pretence to occupy the episcopal chair of the metropolis, that his installation had to be delayed till he could first be made a member of the Church by being baptized ! This fact will give the reader some idea of the principles of the men who ruled the councils of the Church at that period. They objected to Gregory, the son of the sainted Nonna

<sup>1</sup> This was plainly a case of natural antipathy. These Church leaders *felt* that Gregory was a man of quite a different spirit from themselves ; and it is very possible that he was indiscreet enough to let them know it. Indeed, from the many allusions to the subject in his orations, epistles, and songs, they could scarcely fail to discover it. In a letter to his friend Procopius (Epist. 55), he says : ' I am so constituted that, to speak the truth, I dread every assembly of bishops ; for I have never yet seen any good result from them—never have been at a synod which did more for the suppression than it did for the increase of evils. *An indescribable thirst for contention and for rule prevails in them.*' Such also was the experience of Martin of Tours. Of him Milton says, that ' being held in admiration of all men, he had only the bishops for his enemies.' The poet adds, on the authority of Sulpitius, who was Martin's intimate friend, that the latter ' found God less favourable to him after he was bishop than before ; and for his last sixteen years would come at no bishop's meeting.' From which it appears that Martin as well as Gregory was not politic enough to be a leader, nor plastic enough to be a follower,—a very troublesome position for any man to occupy, as many find at this day.

and of the respected Bishop of Nazianzen, himself a man of irreproachable character and of distinguished professional acquirements ; one, moreover, who had been eminently instrumental in purging the capital from the leaven of Arianism. They objected to him on the ground of a law that was practically obsolete ; and yet they allowed this untried, untrained, and unbaptized novice to be planted in his place. Surely, if He in whose name that council was assembled had been actually present, as He was spiritually presumed to be, He would have addressed these Church rulers as He had once addressed the race of men from which they had manifestly sprung : 'Ye blind guides ! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The sober evidence of history will not allow much weight to the personal authority of the Fathers of Constantinople. In an age when the ecclesiastics had scandalously degenerated from the model of apostolical purity, the most worthless and corrupt were always the most eager to frequent and disturb the episcopal assemblies. The conflict and fermentation of so many opposite interests and tempers inflamed the passions of the bishops ; *and their ruling passions were the love of gold and the love of dispute.*'—GIBBON, vol. v. p. 27, Lond. edit. 1806.

### XIII.

#### THE CITY AND COURT OF BYZANTIUM.

'Earth hath not anything to show more fair :  
Nill would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty ;  
The city now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields and to the sky,  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.'

WORDSWORTH.

THE enthusiasm with which the Hebrew poets dwell on the glory of their sacred capital is sometimes very touching. Its temple, its palaces, its walls and bulwarks, the mountains that stood round about it, the waters of Siloah that flowed softly by it—in short, all the characteristic features by which it was distinguished, made it in their eyes the noblest city that ever the sun shone upon. 'Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion,' says David, 'the joy of the whole earth.' 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!' 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning ; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.' In these bursts of passionate admiration and patriotic devotion, there is something which is extremely pathetic.

But the Jewish capital, viewed merely in its external aspect, was at the best but a bare and insignificant place when contrasted with the great metropolitan cities of the Gentiles, such as Athens and Rome, or even Babylon and Thebes. Of all these, however, the city of the Cæsars was, if not the gracefulest, by far the

grandest. And yet, when Constantine had determined to remove the seat of government from the banks of the Tiber to the shores of the Bosphorus, he resolved at the same time that his new capital should surpass the old in the splendour of its buildings, as much as it did in the beauty of its site; and although, in coming to such a resolution, he seems to have forgotten that 'Rome was not built in a day,' it must be admitted that all one man could do was actually done to emulate the work of ages. This at least may be said, that, under the strong will and rough genius of Constantine, the little Greek town of Byzantium rose, 'like an exhalation,' into a glorious metropolis, almost as matchless for its architectural magnificence as for its geographical situation.

Gibbon's description is short and good: 'If we survey Byzantium, in the extent which it acquired with the august name of Constantinople, the figure of the imperial city may be represented under that of an unequal triangle. The obtuse point, which advances towards the east and the shores of Asia, meets and repels the waves of the Thracian Bosphorus. The northern side of the city is bounded by the harbour, and the southern is washed by the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora. The basis of the triangle is opposed to the west, and terminates the continent of Europe.'<sup>1</sup>

It will thus be seen that this famous city stands on the confines of Europe and Asia, where the dark waters of the Euxine rush through the Straits of the Bosphorus to mingle with the bright blue waves of the Mediterranean. These Straits are about sixteen miles long, with an average breadth of but a mile and a half; so that they combine the depth and freshness of an arm of the sea, with the winding grace and sylvan beauty of a river. That part of it which forms the harbour of Constantinople is called *the Golden Horn*,—a name which

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 176, Bohn's edit.

it seems to have received at a very early period, and which was expressive at once of its curved shape (supposed to resemble the horn of an ox), and also of the wealth which flowed into it from all the subject kingdoms of the East and West.

Looking from the city to the other side of the Straits, the spectator sees before him the shores of Asia stretching back to the rugged mountains of Thrace and Bithynia, crowned in the far distance by the snow-covered peaks of Olympus—the paradise of poets, and the fabled abode of the gods. Here in every direction is classic land: Mount Athos, Mount Ida, the Rhetian promontory, the tomb of Ajax, old Troy still luminous with the light of the past; and, winding down among these charmed regions, the Simois and the Scamander wimple on at their own sweet will towards the waters of the Hellespont, with the sound of ancient lyrics in their rippling flow. Of the whole scenery embraced within this view, it may be said, almost with literal truth, that

‘Not a mountain lifts its head unsung;’

and even as regards the two streams we have just mentioned, although they are little more than ‘brooks,’ they might sing in a sense peculiar to themselves:

‘For men may come, and men may go,  
But we go on for ever.’

By a curious coincidence, new Rome, as it was called, was founded, like the old city, on a group of seven hills, rising above each other in regular succession, five of which were enclosed with the walls. Its length was about three, and its circumference (taking in the suburbs of Galata and Pera) measured about fourteen Roman miles. The streets and buildings were designed on the most sumptuous scale; and if the reign of Constantine produced no such artificers as the men who in the days of the early Cæsars executed those works of art which

all succeeding ages have admired and sought in vain to rival, the Emperor stripped the cities of Greece and Asia of their noblest monuments, so as by means of them to enhance the splendour of his new metropolis. Besides a variety of pillars, obelisks, and other remains of ancient art thus appropriated, we are told that among the Grecian statues with which the forum was adorned was a famous one of Apollo—the work of the celebrated Phidias. It was of bronze, and stood on a pillar a hundred and twenty feet high, composed partly of white marble and partly of porphyry. The palace was a magnificent edifice, which scarcely yielded to the residence of Rome itself, and which, together with the dependent courts, gardens, and porticos, covered a large space of ground on the banks of the Propontis, between the Circus or Hippodrome on the one hand, and the Church of St. Sophia on the other. ‘A particular description, composed about a century after the foundation of the city, enumerates a capitol, or school of learning, a circus, two theatres, eight public and one hundred and fifty-three private baths; fifty-two porticos, five granaries, eight aqueducts or reservoirs of water; four spacious halls for the meetings of the senate, or courts of justice; fourteen churches, fourteen palaces, and four thousand three hundred and eighty-eight houses, which for their size and beauty deserved to be distinguished from the plebeian habitations.’<sup>1</sup>

Nor were these buildings out of proportion to the number of inhabitants; for it seems that, along with those classes whose presence is necessary at the seat of government, a large proportion of the principal families in Rome followed the court, not merely for reasons of state, but drawn thither in many cases by special invita-

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 191, Bohn's edit. To Gibbon's minute and exhaustive account, extending to upwards of fifty pages, we are mainly indebted for these details.



tion from the Emperor, who bestowed on his favourites the palaces he had reared, assigning to them lands and pensions at the same time to support their dignity. Hence, in less than a century, the piece of ground mapped out for the capital, ample as it seemed, was insufficient to accommodate the growing population ; and the additional suburbs on either side might alone have constituted a very considerable city.

From this account of Byzantium, now called Constantinople, after the name of its imperial re-founder, our readers will be able to form some idea of the place to which the presbyter of Antioch was called, and also of the general character of the congregation and community of which he was appointed to take the spiritual oversight. It was made up of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, including the royal family, the officers of the court, the government, and the army, with the members of the senate and the bar, along with a large number of the Roman aristocracy of all ranks and creeds. To these must be added the various classes of the commonalty, from the rich merchants of Galata and Pera, down to the general mass of artificers, labourers, and slaves, comprising a very mixed multitude of every name and nation.

The presence of the court had necessarily a great influence on the society of the capital—greater, perhaps, than we can well realize at this day. ‘The divinity that doth hedge a king’ was no myth at that time ; ‘the right divine’ of such personages to ‘govern wrong’ was part of the Christian as well as of the social creed. This was all the more unfortunate in the present case, considering how little there was of anything approaching to ‘divinity,’ or even to the ordinary qualities of decent humanity, in the character of the royal youth who then occupied the throne. Unlike his father, who was both a resolute and conscientious ruler, the son of Theodosius

was a prince of the Oriental type—languid, effeminate, self-indulgent ; exhibiting all the Epicurean tastes and voluptuous habits of Sardanapalus, without any portion of the personal courage which helped to throw a gleam of dying lustre over the last hours of that ‘fast’ and famous Assyrian. Here is a sketch of Arcadius, drawn by the skilful hand of our archbishop himself :—

‘The Emperor wears on his head either a diadem or a crown of gold, set with precious stones of inestimable value. These ornaments and his purple garments are reserved for his sacred person alone, and his robes of silk are embroidered with the figures of golden dragons. His throne is of massive gold. Whenever he appears in public he is surrounded by his courtiers, his guards, and his attendants. Their spears, their shields, their cuirasses, with the bridles and trappings of their horses, have either the substance or appearance of gold ; and the large splendid boss in the middle of their shield is set round with smaller bosses representing the shape of the human eye. The two mules that draw the chariot of the monarch are perfectly white, and glittering all over with gold. The chariot itself, of pure and solid gold, attracts the admiration of the spectators, who contemplate (at a distance) the purple curtains, the snowy carpet, the size of the precious stones, and the resplendent plates of gold that gleam and flash as they are agitated by the motion of the carriage. The imperial pictures are white, on a blue ground ; the Emperor appears seated on his throne, with his arms, his horses, and his guards beside him, and his vanquished enemies in chains at his feet.’

Our readers will have no difficulty in forming a ‘picture’ for themselves of the ‘poor creature’ who at this period wore the crown of the East, and into whose light, jewelled fingers the sceptre of the Cæsars had fallen. Though he had the ambition to be repre-

sented by the artists of his time as a warrior and a conqueror, he was in reality such a spiritless coward, that, in order to save his capital, he had to entreat the forbearance of that truculent adventurer Gainas the Goth, and to place himself at his mercy by making him 'master-general,' or commander-in-chief, of his armies. The Empress Eudoxia, though not by any means so weak, was even more worthless than her husband. He was good for nothing, except to lounge in his palace, or to drive out occasionally with his gold chariot and white mules, in the style which has just been described ; but such was not the case with her. 'She was,' says the best historian of those times, 'a young and beautiful woman, who indulged her passions and despised her husband. Count John enjoyed at least the familiar confidence of the Empress ; and the public named him as the real father of Theodosius the younger.'<sup>1</sup> The birth of a son was accepted, however, by the pious husband as an event the most fortunate to himself and to his family, and to the Eastern world ; and the royal infant, by an unprecedented favour, was invested with the titles of Cæsar and Augustus.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be mentioned here that Eudoxia was the daughter of a Roman officer of the name of Bauto, who had attained to the rank of a general in the army of Theodosius. Dying while she was comparatively young, he left her to the care of certain relatives, by whom she was educated, and with whom she lived at Constantinople. As a young maiden, she was quite as remarkable for her modesty as for her beauty ; and both were set off by mental gifts and accomplishments of no common order. So far from betraying any signs of the

<sup>1</sup> To this report Zosimus alludes as follows : 'John, to whom the Emperor confided all his secrets, and who was said by many people to be the father of the presumed son of Arcadius' (c. v. p. 3).

<sup>2</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. v. p. 411.

bold and unscrupulous temper which she afterwards displayed, she led at this period a life of study and retirement, attending to the instructions of the philosopher Pansophius, who was much delighted with the thoughtfulness and docility of his fair pupil. The story of her elevation to the honours of the purple forms one of the social romances of the time, and the means by which it was accomplished affords another striking illustration of the moral and political condition of the empire in the days of Chrysostom.

At the death of Theodosius in A.D. 395, his two sons were still very young; Arcadius, the elder, being only eighteen, and Honorius between eleven and twelve years of age. As the empire was divided between them, they were both placed under the direction of two eminent individuals, who were appointed to act in the double capacity of private counsellors and provisional rulers of the State. To Honorius, as has been previously noticed, his father had assigned the Western Empire, including Italy, Spain, Gaul, and the rest of the transalpine provinces; while Arcadius was invested with the government of the East, from Constantinople to Grand Cairo, and from the Bosphorus to the banks of the Tigris. The younger brother was committed to the care of a distinguished military chief of the name of Stilicho, who was married to a sister of the deceased Theodosius, and who had therefore some pretensions to represent the reigning family at Rome. Arcadius was entrusted to the guardianship of Rufinus, prefect of the city, and member of the senate at Constantinople. Jealous of the superior influence which Stilicho derived from his connection with the imperial house, Rufinus had resolved to secure the advantage of a similar alliance by promoting a marriage between his daughter and his royal ward. Reckoning on the weakness of Arcadius, and on the strength of his own influence over him, everything had been put in

train for the wedding, which was expected to take place in the course of a few weeks.

Meanwhile Rufinus was called to Antioch to inquire into the conduct of Lucian, one of the leading officials there, whom he had himself recommended to the Emperor. As this individual had been guilty of some abuses of a flagrant character, which had excited the displeasure of Arcadius, it was thought advisable to remove that cause of offence out of the way as speedily as possible. As soon, therefore, as Rufinus had arrived in Antioch, Lucian was apprehended, and, after a summary trial, was condemned and scourged to death. During his absence, however, other parties took advantage of the opportunity for the purpose of defeating his ambitious designs. Eutropius having determined, if possible, to supplant him, and being secretly encouraged by Arcadius at Constantinople, and by Stilicho at Rome, resolved to steal a march upon him at this crisis. He saw that if Rufinus succeeded in bringing about the proposed match, his own chances of promotion to the premiership would be effectually frustrated.

Under pretence of carrying out the arrangements on which the former had entered before he left, the eunuch made great preparations for the nuptial festivities. The prime minister was hastening back from Antioch; and his daughter was, after the manner of the East, about to be escorted from his house to the imperial residence, there to be espoused to the Emperor. Eutropius, accompanied by the officers and chamberlains of the court, walked in gay procession through the streets of the capital. The citizens turned out in holiday array to look at the splendid wedding presents that were borne by the servants of the palace, and to get a glimpse of the lucky maiden who was to be decked with these jewels of silver and gold, and brought to the king in her bridal robes. Contrary, however, to all expectation, the *cortège*,

passing the mansion of the prefect, stopped at the door of a modest dwelling in a different part of the town. It was that in which Eudoxia lived. Eutropius had found means to bring this young and beautiful damsel under the notice of Arcadius, by leaving a miniature likeness of her on his table. The Emperor was so much captivated by it, that he readily joined in the plot which the treacherous eunuch had concocted. A base and cruel plot it was, so far at least as the poor daughter of Rufinus was concerned, and one that shows how little regard was paid either to public faith or private honour in these times, even by the highest personages in the realm. It is needless to say that the lady of the likeness, at whose abode the procession halted, was conducted in triumph to the palace, and became that day the bride of Arcadius and the Empress of the East.

Prosperity is a great revealer of character. It brings out those qualities that lie under the surface, as surely as the undeveloped parts of a plant are drawn forth by the heat of the sun. Hence it has been remarked of Eudoxia, that 'she preserved her beauty, but that her virtues were not proof against the trials of her position. She became proud, bold, worldly, and luxurious. Her love of pleasure became so excessive, that nothing could satisfy it. To the simplicity of her tastes succeeded an insatiable avidity for gold. Her heart became hard and cruel. It is said of her, that ferocity flowed in the veins of this daughter of the Franks (her father was of that race) with the blood of her terrible ancestors. It is even suspected that, among the virtues which she lost on the throne, were chastity, and fidelity to her conjugal duties.'<sup>1</sup>

But besides the crushing blow which Eutropius had thus given to the confident hopes of the minister, there was also another object which he gained by this well-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Merle D'Aubigne.

contrived and successfully conducted scheme. It seems that Rufinus bore no good-will to Eudoxia's family, and that he had a hand in putting her guardian to death. She was now, therefore, in a position to be avenged upon him. Nor did she fail to put forth all her influence with the Emperor against him. But he still clung to his place, and was content to put up with stiff receptions and studied insults at court, rather than part with the power which he had so long possessed, and of which Arcadius was unwilling, or perhaps afraid, to deprive him. It was therefore necessary that other steps of a more decisive kind should be taken in order to get rid of him. A regiment of soldiers which Stilicho sent to Constantinople had arrived, and there was to be a public review. At this review Rufinus appeared, riding beside the Emperor as his principal attendant. By a previous understanding between Stilicho and Eutropius, a party of soldiers, as they were passing before Arcadius, stepped in between him and his companion, and, having enclosed Rufinus within their ranks, they fell upon him and slew him; after which they dragged his dead body to the forum, where it was exhibited as a public show.

These events took place some time before the preacher of Antioch was called to the capital, and were among the chief means by which Eutropius rose into power. It is difficult to imagine how a person of his character and antecedents ever thought of bringing Chrysostom to Constantinople. Had he known anything about him, he would have seen at once that the presence of such a man would be like the beginning of a day of judgment to himself, and to all his kind, whether in the city or in the court. It is very probable, however, that all he had before him was the charm of that dramatic eloquence with which he was so much enchanted in the old church of Antioch, and the additional lustre he expected to derive from being the means of introducing such a

preacher into the diocese of Constantinople. Eutropius was not a religious man—anything but that; and we cannot therefore suppose that it was from any motive of that kind he made such a choice. On the contrary, looking at his own character, and his subsequent behaviour towards the archbishop, it may be very safely assumed that, if he had anticipated how Chrysostom was to act, he would never have taken such pains to smuggle him out of Antioch as he did. Strange as that proceeding was, it forms almost the only creditable incident in the career of this extraordinary person.

He began life as a slave, and was first engaged in the service of Ptolemy, by whom he was employed as a groom of the stables, or in some such menial office. Ptolemy made a present of him to an old general of the name of Arintheus, who transferred him to his daughter on her marriage. With her (being a eunuch) he lived in a sort of hybrid capacity, between a page and a lady's maid; combing her hair, carrying her billets and her books, and performing other services of a similar kind. After passing through the hands and houses of various owners, he was at last purchased for the imperial family, who found him so active and intelligent, that Theodosius promoted him to the office of principal eunuch of the palace, and entrusted him with many commissions even of public importance. Having ingratiated himself with the young Arcadius during his father's lifetime, he was not only kept on by him when he came to the throne, but advanced to the highest honours in the State. In the course of little more than a twelvemonth, he was gradually advanced to the rank of a senator, a noble of the empire, and ultimately to the supreme dignity of the consulship. This was counted so great a scandal, that Honorius and his ministers at Rome refused to recognise the act. But such was the folly of Arcadius, that he did not hesitate to profane the public honours of the



State by conferring them in this way on one of a class who had never before ventured to aspire to such distinctions. 'Eutropius,' says Gibbon, 'was the first of his artificial sex who dared to assume the character of a Roman magistrate and general. Sometimes, in the presence of the blushing senate, he ascended the tribunal, to pronounce judgment, or to repeat elaborate harangues ; and sometimes appeared on horseback at the head of his troops, in the dress and armour of a hero.'<sup>1</sup>

At the time of Chrysostom's appointment to the imperial see, he had reached the height of his ambition, and was made the instrument—the *blind* instrument evidently—of conferring that appointment upon him. The rest of his strange history is yet before us, and will be taken up in its chronological order. It is enough to say here, that the eunuch neither bore his honours with meekness, nor used his power with discretion. His case affords another illustration—one of the most signal, perhaps, on record—of the old adage regarding 'the beggar on horseback,' and the direction in which the rider's course usually lies. In order to give our readers some idea of this, we cannot do better than quote the statement of Claudian, who lived at the time, and was among the last of the famous race of Roman poets. 'The impotence of the eunuch,' says the satirist, 'has only helped to give a keener edge to his avarice. The same hand which, in his humbler days, was practised in small pilferings, and confined in its operations to the coffers of his master, is now laid upon the treasures of the world ; and this vile huckster of the empire marks off and appraises the Roman provinces from Mount Hæmus to the Tigris. One man, by the surrender of his villa, is made procurator of Asia ; a second goes in for Syria with his wife's jewels ; and a third regrets that he has parted with his paternal acres for the distant

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. p. 484.

governorship of Bithynia. In the ante-chamber of Eutropius, a large tablet is hung up which shows the prices of the various provinces. The separate valuations of Pontus, of Galatia, of Lydia, are carefully set down. Lycia may be had for so many thousand pieces of gold ; but Phrygia, being a better bargain, will cost a good deal more. The eunuch wishes to wipe out his personal disgrace by bringing down all others to his own level ; and as he has sold himself, he is determined to sell everybody else.’<sup>1</sup>

The testimony of a satirist must always be received with some considerable abatement, especially when the *animus* is so apparent and so vehement as it is in this case. But the castigations of Claudian are borne out to a large extent by the sober facts of history, which leave scarcely any room to doubt that the imperial favourite was worthy of the imperial fool who called himself his master, and who had so little sense of propriety, or even of common decency, as to entrust the affairs of his vast dominions to the management of such a rapacious and unscrupulous ‘waif’ of nature and the world as this wretched eunuch.

<sup>1</sup> Claudian, i. 192-209.

## XIV.

### THE FAITHFUL AMBASSADOR.

'His nature is too noble for the world :  
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,  
Or Jobe for his power to thunder. His heart's his mouth ;  
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;  
And being angry, must forget that ever  
He heard the name of death.'—SHAKESPEARE.

'I faithful ambassador is health.'—SOLOMON.

FROM the preceding account of Arcadius, his wife, and minister, the reader may estimate the prospects of the new archbishop in entering on this field. These prospects, not very bright at the best, were rendered still darker by the influence which the court had hitherto exerted on the spiritual rulers of the place, and the manner in which the imperial family interfered with their freedom of action. It was by such interference that Constantine had filled the churches of the city with Arian teachers, and persuaded or compelled all classes of the people to embrace the doctrines of that heretical sect. When Theodosius rose into power, and overturned the system which his predecessors had so long and so strenuously supported, he did so very much in the same spirit—that is, the spirit of dominion and arbitrary dictation. Hence 'the religion of Constantinople,' as Dean Milman justly remarks, 'was the religion of the Emperor.' The church as well as the capital being governed from the palace, the legitimate influence of the bishop was thus completely paralysed. This grievance was all the greater, because the members of the

court were also members of the general congregation, and therefore personally cognizant of all that the bishop said and did ; while they were liable, at the same time, to be influenced by the local feelings and party misconstructions that his sayings and doings were sure to call forth. To any man, however dull or pliable, such a position could not fail to be irksome, but to a man of Chrysostom's character and spirit it must have been no common trial.

We have not been able to meet with any account of the state of his mind at this period, or of the circumstances under which he entered on the duties of his office. All we know is, that there were some clerical caballings, not of a very friendly nature, connected with his installation. The person chosen by the Emperor to conduct the service was Theophilus of Alexandria ; but he, mortified that Chrysostom was appointed, instead of a candidate whom he had recommended, refused to officiate on the occasion ; alleging that the presbyter of Antioch was not a suitable man for the imperial see, and hinting, moreover, that he had heard of certain unfavourable reports concerning him. Eutropius, who knew Theophilus well, soon silenced his scruples, by laying before him a document which contained, not reports, but serious charges against *himself*. The sight of that document was enough. The Bishop of Alexandria, running his eye over it, dropped his difficulties and objections at once, and agreed to ordain John of Antioch as Archbishop of Constantinople.

The office to which he was thus elected was one of immense responsibility, and we may well suppose that the day of his induction was a day of great heaviness and deep searchings of heart. But he was not sent a warfare on his own charges ; nor can we doubt that, amid all the fears and misgivings by which his faith was tried, the presence of his Master was with him, and His

promise of aid fulfilled. He was aware that it was mainly, if not wholly, on account of his eminence as a Christian orator that he was made primate of the metropolis and preacher of the court. Whether he was likely to succeed as an episcopal ruler yet remained to be proved, but as to his pulpit qualifications there was no question ; and accordingly the reputation won in the old church at Antioch was sustained and heightened in the pulpit of St. Sophia.

From what has been said, however, of the members of the court—who were also the leading members of the congregation—it will be seen at once that he was but ill suited for the position to which he was thus appointed. His very excellences as a man and as a minister of Christ, his simple tastes and semi-monastic habits, but, above all, his natural and irrepressible tendency to ‘speak the truth *in his heart*’—that is, as he saw and felt it to be—‘without partiality and without hypocrisy,’—these qualities, essential to the office of a Christian teacher, were calculated to operate very seriously against him as a metropolitan ruler, especially in such a place as Constantinople then was.

Had he been simply a man of learning, skilled in Latin versions and in Greek idioms, with a sufficient tinge of religious or ecclesiastical feeling to suit the office which he held, he might have done very well. Or if, like his predecessor Nectarius, he could have acted the part of a courtly prelate—a smooth and smiling patriarch of the Church, who knew how to dispense social hospitalities and episcopal benedictions to such as had any title to receive them—he would have done better still. But perhaps the best *rôle* he could have taken up was that of a great ecclesiastical chief—watching over the interests of the Church as a sacred corporation—keeping on good terms for that purpose with the Emperor and the leading men of the court—making

himself useful, sometimes to one party and sometimes to another—pleasing his brethren by his zeal for the ‘order,’ pleasing his fellow-citizens by his public spirit and his affable manners, and pleasing all men by his bland speeches and ‘judicious charities.’ This was undoubtedly the most popular, as well as the most distinguished position that lay open to him ; and, had he filled it with success, he would have finished his course with honour, and—‘died greatly and universally lamented.’

But, unhappily, as some of our readers may think, and as certain of our writers have actually said,<sup>1</sup> he was quite incapable of following out any of these courses. He was only a simple and sincere man, wanting those convolutions of brain, and those facile adaptations of mind and body, necessary for playing such a part, or indeed for *playing any part at all*. He was mastered by himself. His life was one and indivisible, moulded by the truths of the New Testament, and by the traditions of the apostolic age ; and to be anything else than what he was—to assume any other character than that which his education and religion had made natural to him—was for him an utter impossibility. In a word, he was endowed with the twofold gifts of grace and genius ; and though, in virtue of the latter, he could shape out a thousand characters, he was forced by the dominant influence of the former to adhere to one. Besides this unity of heart and mind, he had for long years—ever, indeed, since his residence in the desert cave—been subject to bodily ailments, which grew upon him as he advanced in life, and increased to a still greater degree those nervous susceptibilities which are peculiar to the *genus irritabile vatum*—for a *prophet* he was, in the poetical as well as in the prophetic sense of that term. Looking, then, at his personal characteristics, and the

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, for example, and Dean Milman, who might have known better.

post which he was called to occupy, Crabbe's lines apply with singular aptness to his prospects at this period :

'Genius ! thou gift of Heaven ! thou light divine !  
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine !  
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,  
Oft damp thy vigour and impede thy course ;  
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain  
Thy nobler efforts to contend with pain.'

We are not exactly aware what the subject of his inaugural discourse at Constantinople was, but we know that the Homily on the Parable of the Talents, which he had previously delivered at Antioch, was one of those which he gave there ; and, considering the spirit of Arcadius, his consort, and his counsellors, we may imagine the feeling of astonishment with which they must have listened to many of the statements which that homily contained. We have no reason, however, to suppose that they were sinners above all others. The presumption is, that the tone of morality among the various classes around them would not be very much higher (though it could scarcely be lower) than that which prevailed in the court circles. If so, the statements to which we refer must have fallen among the principal members of the congregation like a shower of hailstones.

'Let us then,' he said, 'hear this parable ; for though its import may at first seem manifest, it contains a rich mine of hidden meaning. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king who would take account of his servants." Do not merely run over these words, but explain to me about that judgment-seat. Having entered into thy conscience, examine whatsoever deeds thou hast done in thy whole life ; and when thou hearest that the Lord taketh account of His servants, understand thereby of *kings*, of *generals*, of *governors*, of rich, of poor, of bond, of free, of all men ; for we must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. If thou art

rich, consider that thou wilt have to render an account of whether thou hast *expended thy wealth* on courtezans or on the poor; whether on parasites and flatterers, or on the needy; whether in debauchery or in charity; whether in luxury, extravagance, intemperance, or in aid of the afflicted. Not only will an account be demanded of thee concerning thy expenditure, but also concerning the manner in which thou hast *amassed thy wealth*—whether by honest toil, or by rapine and avarice; whether thou hast received it by hereditary patrimony, or acquired it by ruining the inheritance of the orphan, or by spoiling the widow of her goods. For, as we demand an account of our servants not only concerning expenditure, but also concerning income—inquiring whence they receive the money, from whom, in what manner, and how much—so God not only requires an account of how we spend our riches, but also of how we have obtained them.

‘Not only must the rich man render an account of his wealth, but the *poor man* of his penury: whether he has endured it well, and with a due sense of gratitude towards God; whether he has given way to impatience and repining; whether he has not arraigned the divine providence at seeing another man living in luxury and excess, while he himself is left in straits. Just as the rich man is required to give an account of his alms, so is the poor man of his endurance; and not of his endurance only, but of *his* alms too. For poverty is no hindrance to charity, whereof the widow who threw her two mites into the treasury is a proof, as she by that small gift surpassed those who cast in much.

‘Not only rich and poor, but also *rulers and judges*, will be strictly examined—whether they have corrupted justice; whether they have decided between litigants from favour or from hate; whether they have been moved by flattery to judge unrighteously, or from the



remembrance of some offence have wronged the innocent.

‘Not only civil magistrates, but *those set over the Church*, will have to render an account of their rule. They, above all others, will have to pass through a most rigid and most responsible examination. For of those to whom the ministry of the word has been committed will it be carefully inquired whether, through fear or through envy, they have neglected to teach any of those things that are necessary to salvation; whether they have set forth the same by their works as well as by their words; whether they have clearly explained everything, and kept back nothing that was profitable.

‘Again, he who has attained to the *office of a bishop* will have to stand a trial, severe as the elevation to which he has ascended is great. Not only will he be answerable as regards his doctrine and his protection of the poor, but also as to his duly proving those on whom he lays his hands. For Paul, referring to these things, wrote to Timothy: “Lay hands suddenly on no man; neither be partaker of other men’s sins.” And, exhorting the Hebrews concerning these same spiritual rulers, he made them to fear in another way, saying thus: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.”’

He then goes on to show, that besides our words and works we shall have to give an account of our secret thoughts and purposes—thus applying the word with singular closeness and discrimination to every class of men, from the Emperor and the prime minister down to the poorest individual before him; not forgetting the clergy who sat around him, still less the duties which devolved upon himself as a ruler in the Church. If this was not his inaugural discourse, it bears all the marks of having been prepared for some such object.

But while the teaching department was that in which Chrysostom excelled, we have no reason to suppose that he was deficient in any of the other gifts falling properly within the scope of the Christian ministry. If so, it was certainly not because he was ignorant of their nature, or had not fully considered them. For even before he entered on the duties of the ministry he had examined the whole subject with great care ; and the result of his examination is to be found in his work on the Priesthood, which was written while he was yet living with the monks in the desert. In that work he sets forth very fully the views he had formed as to the high importance of the pastoral office, together with the solemn duties and obligations which are connected with it. In opposition to those who thought lightly of the qualifications it required, he dwells with great emphasis on the preparatory training necessary for the efficient discharge of its functions. For, strange as it may appear, there were some in those days who considered such training to be quite superfluous, pointing to the case of the apostles in support of their opinion. There were two parties in particular by whom this notion was held, and who maintained it on different and totally opposite grounds. The one consisted of the monks, who were the ecclesiastical levellers of the time, and the most of whom looked upon human learning and all other human accomplishments as hindrances rather than helps to the attainment of spiritual wisdom.<sup>1</sup> The other party were the sacerdotalists, who placed the essentials of religion in the exact performance of ceremonial rites, for which no scholarship or intellectual training of any kind is required.

<sup>1</sup> These worthy monks, like other worthy men of the same stamp, had their own deficiencies in view when they came to this conclusion. Learning is never despised by any except those who don't possess it. And no man who is truly learned—that is, who is truly wise—ever trusted to his learning, or boasted of it, or presumed upon it, in any way.

So far as the administration of the sacraments, the intoning of the services, the choosing and changing of vestments, with the marchings, bowings, genuflexions, and other postures (and 'impostures') connected with that system are concerned, it is quite clear that what is needed is not learning, but *drilling*. The proper schools for such performers are those by which actors and dancing-masters, and other artists of the same class, are prepared for the histrionic exhibitions by which they make their bread. This fact, obvious enough in itself, was soon discovered by the rulers of the Church ; and the consequence was, that a set of men, distinguished by the name of ' Mass-priests,' were called into requisition, and thoroughly equipped for their work in the way we have mentioned. These men, without any knowledge either of Latin or Greek, and without understanding a single syllable of what was contained in their Breviaries, were found to perform the service with the most perfect accuracy, and to go through their lesson with, in some cases, a degree of grace, and gravity, and sonorous fervour, that left many of their scholarly brethren far behind them. As to their not understanding what they said, they knew at least as much as the people in whose hearing and for whose benefit they were praying ; and that was surely enough. If they satisfied the devotional aspirations of their flocks, and were quite up to their level, if not in most cases considerably beyond it, what more could be reasonably looked for ?

But besides the *opus operatum* to which the public duties of the priesthood were confined, and which plainly demanded no scholastic accomplishments, it was believed that great virtues were conveyed by the act of ordination to those who were invested with this office ; so that, however ignorant or immoral they were before, or might still continue to be after passing through that process of episcopal manipulation, all their official acts, whether

right or wrong, wise or foolish, were stamped with the seal of heaven, and carried consequences that no man was at liberty to question or resist, at the peril of his soul. Such a belief reduced all preliminary qualifications to the lowest minimum ; for what is the value of other acquirements, be they what they may, when weighed against the fund of celestial wisdom and supernatural grace thus communicated ? It was on this ground that men were raised to the priestly office who had no thought of such promotion, and had never turned their attention to the subject at all. Chrysostom's predecessor was elected, as we have already noticed, while acting as one of the senators of the city, and had never become even a member of the Church. His ordination had actually to be put back till his friends got time to have him baptized.

About the same period (or, to be precise, in 361), the people of Cæsarea,<sup>1</sup> backed by the soldiers of the garrison, chose for their bishop one of the civil magistrates, Eusebius, who was in the same condition as Nectarius—that is, without baptism ; and the neighbouring clergy were forced by the popular voice to ordain him to the charge.<sup>2</sup> But a still more extraordinary instance was that of Synesius. He was appointed to the bishopric of Ptolemais while yet a pagan, or at least not a professed Christian. He himself reclaimed against his election, declaring that he was totally unfit for such a situation ; but the clergy and the people both insisted on his accepting it, till at last, overcome by their importunities, he gave way, and was forthwith ordained by that notorious stickler for doctrinal orthodoxy and ecclesiastical purity, Theophilus of Alexandria,—a personage of whom we have heard something already, and shall hear more anon. Synesius, however, Platonist though he

<sup>1</sup> In Cappadocia.

<sup>2</sup> Neander's *General History*, vol. iii. p. 205.

was, refused to part with his wife. But they agreed to take him on his own terms. As they did not object to his paganism, they could not well be over-scrupulous in regard to the question of celibacy. Gregory of Nazianzen tells us that tax-gatherers, sea-captains, farmers, and retired officers of the army, were often suddenly laid hands on in this way, and elevated to the episcopal bench.<sup>1</sup> In such cases the act of ordination was supposed to cover all defects, and to convey all the gifts and graces of which these extemporized bishops stood in any need.

Although Chrysostom's views were a good deal tainted with the sacerdotal ideas of his time, there were two saving elements which kept him from sinking into the pagan theory of the priesthood.<sup>2</sup> The first was his recognition of the universal priesthood of believers; and the second, his reception of the divine word as the only rule of faith and practice. By the one he admitted that Christians, as such, had access to God through the one great High Priest of our profession, and were not left dependent on the sacrifices and intercessions of an official body professing to represent them. He believed, indeed, that the ministers of the Church acted as mediators between God and the people; that they were clothed with authority to declare His mind, and to administer His law; but he held, at the same time, that in order to ascertain what His mind and law were, the real and only infallible standard of appeal was Holy Scripture. His constant reference to the divine word, as the authoritative arbiter in all religious questions,

<sup>1</sup> *Carmen de Episcopis*, v. 150. Such is the sort of channel through which the episcopal *ichor* has descended from 'the Church Primitive and Catholic.'

<sup>2</sup> We doubt if even the pagan priests believed or taught that they were the *sole* representatives of their religion. Certainly the Jewish priests never pretended that *they alone* constituted the Church

takes him entirely out of that class of sacerdotalists with whom we are so familiar at the present day.

So far from standing on any official claim to authority in matters of faith, we find Chrysostom always directing the people from the arrogant assumptions of men to the true and faithful word of God. In his comment on the first Psalm, he says: 'As the tree planted by the water-brooks, since it is continually moistened by water, yields to no irregularity of the atmosphere, so likewise the soul which dwells by the streams of Holy Writ, and is continually irrigated from that source, and receives the dew of the Holy Spirit, will be affected by no change of circumstances, though all the evil influences of the world should breathe upon it. There is nothing else that can afford such consolation to sufferers, for everything else is transitory, and can therefore only impart transitory consolation. But to read the Scriptures is to hold intercourse with God. And what is there in the whole world that can sink a man in sorrow if God comforts him? Let us therefore occupy ourselves in reading the Scriptures, not merely during these two hours (at church), but continually; and let every one, when he goes home from church, take the Bible in his hand, and meditate on the portions that have been read, if he would gain the full advantage that may be reaped from the divine word. For a tree growing by the water-side is supplied with moisture not simply for two or three hours in the day, but all day, as well as all night long. Hence it is covered with foliage, and loaded with fruit, though no one has watered it. Thus the man who always reads the Holy Scriptures, though he has no one to explain them to him, derives great advantage from the constant reading of them.'

There is not a Protestant teacher in the kingdom who can speak more freely in commendation of the sacred Scriptures, or set forth the duty and advantage

of reading them more fully than this fourth century divine does in the beautiful passage we have just quoted, as well as in a multitude of others to the same effect. Here is nothing about the interpretation of the Church, or the tradition of the Fathers, or any of the other miserable dodges and paltry deceits by which men attempt to shut up the wells of salvation, and put their own private padlock upon them, that they may turn those living springs into a source of personal importance or pecuniary gain. Instead of sending the man who is seeking after spiritual instruction to any official interpreter of that kind, this 'golden-mouthed' Homilist says elsewhere: 'Wait for no other teacher; thou hast the word of God. There is no teacher like it! Other teachers *often conceal much from vanity and envy*.<sup>1</sup> Hear this, ye men of the world, and *provide yourselves with Bibles*, as dispensaries for the health of your souls. Ignorance of the Holy Scriptures is the cause of all evils. If we go unarmed to the battle, how shall we escape? Throw not everything upon us: ye are sheep entrusted to us for guidance; yet are ye not irrational creatures, but sheep that are endowed with the gift of reason.'<sup>2</sup>

And alluding, as we have little doubt he does, to those views which the sacerdotalists were sowing in the minds of the people, in order to wean them from the word, and bring them to look to themselves for light, he refers to the old and well-known objections regarding the obscurity of the Bible, and the difficulty of discovering its true meaning: 'The grace of God has so ordered it,' he says, 'that these books should be composed by publicans, fishermen, tentmakers, and shepherds, simple and illiterate men, in order that no ignorant person might resort to such an excuse, but that what was said might

<sup>1</sup> This is manifestly an allusion to the same class of men whom we know of, and who were beginning to act upon the same system at that time.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. ad Coloss. ix. sec. i.

be understood by all ; so that artisans, servants, widows, and the most uninstructed, might be able to profit by it. . . . Take the Bible in thy hand ; hold fast that which thou understandest ; ruminate over those parts that are at present dark to thee ; and if by repeated reading thou canst not discover the meaning, then go to the teacher, and ask his guidance. Only manifest greater zeal ; and if God sees more earnestness in thee, He will not despise thy watching and anxiety ; and though no man should instruct thee in what thou art seeking to know, He Himself will certainly reveal it to thee.’<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we may discover the secret of Chrysostom’s power, and the source of that remarkable influence which he exercised over the minds of his hearers. He spoke because he believed. He had faith in *the truth*. He knew from his own experience that it was the real and only effectual instrument by which souls could be saved. He was too well acquainted with his Bible to forget, that if men ‘must be born again,’ it is not by means of human traditions or priestly incantations, but by the incorruptible seed of that word ‘which liveth and abideth for ever.’ There is a statement in our Saviour’s intercessory prayer which is quite sufficient to meet and dash aside a thousand priestly cavils : ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth ; *Thy word is truth.*’<sup>2</sup> It is not, therefore, without good reason that the wise man says, ‘A faithful ambassador is health.’

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ad Coloss. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Chrysostom’s views on this subject were, as we have already shown, those of Augustine and Jerome, and all the leading men of that age.



## XV.

### ‘NOT OF THIS WORLD.’

‘Our Saviour came not with a gaudy show,  
Nor was His kingdom of the world below.  
Patience in want, and lowliness of mind,  
These marks of Church and Churchmen He designed,  
And living taught, and dying left behind.’

DRYDEN.

IT is admitted by all who know anything of its nature, that the chief design of Christianity is to wean its disciples from the world (in the scriptural sense of that term), and to prepare them for another and higher sphere of existence. We find our Lord declaring, over and over again, that ‘*He* was not of this world,’ that His ‘*people* were not of this world,’ and that His ‘*kingdom* was not of this world.’ It is also noticeable that, among all His immediate followers, none has spoken so strongly of the fundamental antagonism between the spirit of the gospel and the spirit of the world as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved,’ and whose mind and character were most closely akin to His own. There is something very marked and very solemn in the warnings which he addressed to the members of the Church on this subject: ‘Love not *the world*,’ he says, ‘neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ And, that they might be at no loss to understand what he meant, he points out those particular elements that were embodied in his conception of ‘the world:’ ‘All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.’ Hence the three things which are here speci-

fied constitute the essential characteristics by which the world is distinguished : 'The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life'—these include '*all that is in the world.*' In other words, they form the three principal channels into which the whole of its currents run. 'The *first*,' says Dean Alford, 'springs out of the σάρξ, the human nature unrenewed by God ; the *second* resides in that sense (the eye) which takes note of outward things, and so is influenced by them ; and the *third* is connected with the manner of life of worldly men, whereby pride as to display and pomp is cherished. This comprehends in it the means and fashion of living—*table, equipage, income, rank* ; and the ἀλαζονεία arising from out of these is that vainglorious pride so common in the rich and fashionable, and which is "not of the Father, but is of the world."

It was mainly for the purpose of dethroning this pernicious idol that the Son of God, when He came into the world, 'took upon Him the form of a servant.' Passing down by the ranks of the great and the powerful, He chose His place among the poor, at the very bottom of the social scale. By so doing He sought at once to put honour on our common humanity, and to pour contempt on 'the pride of life,' with all its feeding and inflaming lusts. For the same reason He declined to call any of the world's 'great ones' to the help of His cause. The only two men in the rank of rulers who 'believed' in Him, He left outside the immediate circle of His followers ; and when a third individual belonging to the same class proposed to join that circle, He would only admit him on one condition : 'Go,' He says, 'and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and then come and follow me.' That is, he must renounce the world, and enter among His disciples as poor as any of the rest. Nor was this a mere exceptional case. On the contrary, we find that it was one of the original and

fundamental laws of His kingdom. His apostles, according to Peter's acknowledgment, 'left all and followed Him;' and He Himself declared explicitly, that 'if any one loved father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or houses, or lands, more than Him, he was not worthy of Him.' Hence none were accepted by Him but those who were prepared to abandon everything for Him.

The same principle, as we know, was carried out fully by His followers. Among those who were 'added to the Church' on and after the day of Pentecost, we read that 'as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and laid the money at the apostles' feet.' And so strictly was this rule acted upon, that when Ananias and his wife wished to retain a *portion* of their property, or rather of the price they had received for it, in their own hands, they found it necessary to *conceal* what they had done; and we all know the doom with which they were visited for thus attempting to evade, if not the common law, at least the common practice of the Church, at that most vital and momentous period. Much as the fact before us has been overlooked in modern times, it was so deeply impressed on the minds of the primitive Christians, that its influence continued to be felt down to the fourth century, and for some time afterwards. The monastic system, as we have shown, arose out of it. It was by way of renouncing the world, that the ascetics, leaving their friends and possessions, betook themselves to the wilderness; and whatever we may think of the *shape* which the feeling assumed in these cases, or of the manner in which it was expressed, there can be no doubt that the motive by which the parties were influenced sprang from one of the root principles of Christianity.

It was because he felt it to be so, that Chrysostom, at the very outset of his spiritual career, joined the monks in 'the desert;' and when he returned to Antioch, he brought back to the city the same mind with which he

left it. Though now again 'in the world,' he was as little 'of the world' as when he lived in the wilderness. While actively engaged in the duties of his calling during the week, and while on Sabbath he was surrounded by great multitudes of his fellow-citizens, he still lived apart, passing one side, and that the most important side, of his life out of the world, and beyond the range of its struggles and its cares.

It was the same after he was raised to the bishopric of Constantinople. In the midst of the imperial city, surrounded by courtiers and ministers of State, invested with high ecclesiastical authority, and possessed of eloquence that charmed and awed all ranks, he yet sought to follow out the primitive spirit of his profession, and to 'renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world.'<sup>1</sup> It was not an easy thing to do; and the difficulty in his case was greatly aggravated by the peculiar position in which he stood. That position, as it was then, and is still, viewed by many, involved a number of obligations and conditions which were entirely

<sup>1</sup> In the baptismal service of certain Churches we have a very curious monument (using that word in the mortuary sense) of the scripturality, or 'apostolicity'—to use the *Catholic* formula—of this principle. Some lordly ecclesiastic, selected on account of his title and his rank, may often be found standing forth in full canonicals, and putting to a couple of sponsors, who have been selected for the same reason, the following question: 'Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow them nor be led by them?' To that question each of the parties thus interrogated immediately replies, 'I renounce them all!' Now we ask if it is at all decent to keep up such an unseemly farce as this in connection with one of the two sacraments of the Church? Does it not sound like a grim satire on the whole service, to hear the gorgeous functionary ask these fashionable, and it may be profligate, sponsors such a question? If the chief personage who is so boldly 'renounced' wanted to get up a sacred comedy for the amusement of Mammon, Belial, and some of the rest of his friends, we doubt if even *his* ingenuity could invent anything more intensely ludicrous or more dramatically profane!

inconsistent with the Christian ideal which he sought to realize.

As archbishop of the imperial diocese, it was expected that he should maintain a certain degree of state and splendour ; that his dress, his carriage, his equipage, should be in keeping with his high place and his ample revenues. In spite of these expectations, however, he remained as simple in his manners, as unostentatious in his appearance, and as abstemious in his personal habits, as he ever was before. Instead of throwing open his palace to the nobles of the court and the aristocracy of the city, he lived by himself in a mere corner of it, keeping no company, giving no parties or public entertainments of any kind ; nor did he even provide free quarters for those episcopal visitors who were constantly trooping in crowds to the metropolis. These were, no doubt, serious omissions, and it must be allowed that there was something unusual and altogether anomalous in the course thus pursued by him. The example of his predecessors was against him, and the general voice of society, lay and clerical, condemned him. But yet he seems to have enjoyed the approval of his own conscience in acting as he did ; and good reasons were not wanting to justify his conduct, however objectionable it might appear to those who were ignorant of the motives by which it was prompted.

The duties of his diocese were very onerous, and left but little time for social relaxation. He was a student, and general society had no attractions for him ; he was a dyspeptic, and needed quiet and care ; he was a spiritual man, and remembered the Master's words, 'Take ye heed, watch and pray.' But, above all, he was concerned about his own spiritual state, lest, while preaching to others, he himself might be a castaway. Living in the midst of a gay and dissipated capital, surrounded by corruptions and temptations of every

kind, it needed all his watchfulness to keep himself unspotted from the world. As a Christian bishop, he felt that he was bound to 'do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God;' and how could he perform any of these duties if he lived as was expected of him, and as Nectarius and the most of his predecessors had done before him? Would it be 'doing justly,' if he laid out on himself, and on the maintenance of his episcopal station, those revenues that were placed at his disposal for the advancement of his Master's cause? Would it be 'loving mercy,' if he feasted the rich and the great, and left the poor to die of hunger at his gates? Would it be 'walking humbly with God,' if he imitated the manners of the 'Gentile princes' by whom he was surrounded, indulged in the same ostentatious prodigality, and conducted his establishment in the same luxurious style? In one word, how was he to escape 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' if he attempted to maintain his 'episcopal dignity' after the fashion of his predecessors, and indeed the common example of his brethren in the other metropolitan sees?

Looking at the case in the light of these considerations, it is quite clear that the position in which he stood was a *false* one, and such as no minister of Christ ought to be placed in. His dignity, like his Master's, was of a totally different kind from that which courts the notice and calls forth the homage of the world. 'Who is there,' says one of the greatest of the 'sons of light,' in a strain of extraordinary eloquence and of profound suggestiveness,—'Who is there almost that measures wisdom by simplicity, strength by suffering, dignity by lowliness? Who is it that counts it first to be last, something to be nothing, and reckons himself of great command in that he is a servant? Yet God, when He meant to subdue the world and hell at once, made choice of no

other weapons and auxiliaries than these. It had been a small mastery for Him to have drawn out His legions into array, and flanked them with His thunder; therefore He sent foolishness to confute wisdom, weakness to bind strength, despisedness to vanquish pride. And this is *the great mystery of the gospel made good in Christ Himself*; who, as He testifies, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and must be made good in *all His servants* till His second coming.' Speaking of the way in which this 'great mystery of the gospel' has been practically contradicted by the blundering folly of civil rulers and the unhallowed ambition of worldly-minded churchmen, the writer goes on to add, with crushing force of application: 'If to do the work of the gospel'—that is, by weaning men from the world—'Christ our Lord took upon Him the form of a servant, how can His servant in this ministry take upon him the form of a lord?'<sup>1</sup> Nor is John Milton the only one of his class—the class I mean, of poets and men of genius—who seem to have felt, by means of that divining faculty peculiar to themselves, the incongruity there often is between the 'meekness' of the Master and the lordliness of the servants who profess to represent Him. Geoffrey Chaucer, certainly no Puritan, gives us the following description (here a little modernized) of the kind of 'parson' he admired:

'A better parson there was nowhere seen,  
He paid no court to *pomps and reverence*,  
Nor spiced his conscience at his soul's expense;  
But Jesus' love, which *owns no pride or pelf*,  
He taught, but first he followed it himself.'

Then listen to 'the Swan of Avon:'

'Love and meekness  
Become a churchman *better than ambition*;  
Win straying souls with *modesty* again—  
Cast none away.'

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Reason of Church Government*, book ii. chap. i, by John Milton.

Hear Dryden, who dabbled more in religious matters than any other of our poets; and just notice how he pillories that set of ecclesiastics of whom Chrysostom's predecessor may be taken as a type:

‘How sleek their look, how goodly is their mien,  
When big they *strut behind a double chin*;  
Each faculty in blandishments they lull,  
Aspiring to be *venerably dull*:  
No learned debates molest their downy trance,  
Or discompose their pompous ignorance.’<sup>1</sup>

In confirmation of what we have said regarding the heavy round of duties which fell to the lot of our metropolitan overseer, we may state that there was a daily service kept up in the cathedral, the lessons being often accompanied with expositions by himself of those portions of Scripture which were read. Not content with that, he also established an evening meeting for the benefit of those who were employed at their work during the day. This, along with the superintending of the clergy, the visitation of the sick, the inspection of prisons, hospitals, educational and monastic institutions of various kinds, were enough to occupy the time and attention of any man, not to mention what came upon him also, the care of all the churches within the province.

To show how he looked on his own position, with all the cares and responsibilities connected with it, we give the following extract from one of those Homilies, in which all the moods of his mind and phases of his life are reflected as in a mirror:—‘Truly he who will not trouble himself about his office, who does not feel its duties as a burden, may well have easy days. But to

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, the sentiments entertained by the greatest of our English were also held and expressed by the first of the Italian poets, Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto, by whom the act of Constantine in endowing and pampering the bishops is deplored as the scandal and ruin of the Church. See quotations from each of these poets cited and translated by Milton in his treatise, *Of the Reformation in England*, Edin. edit. p. 18.



him who longs for the salvation of the people, who watches over the souls of his flock as one who must give an account, the case is very different: If thou couldst know how we must bear the burdens of all, how no one will pardon us should we lose our temper, or excuse us when we fall into mistakes, thou wouldst look at our position in another light. We are like a city "set on an hill," exposed to the judgment of all, wise and foolish. We are surrounded by the curious and the hostile, and are tormented day and night. Whoever has to look after a dozen *boys* in his house, though they are wholly dependent on him, feels to some extent the difficulty of his task; but how difficult is it when we are called upon to guide *men*, not in our house, every individual of whom has some idea of his own importance, and therefore hesitates whether to follow or not! Such statements, familiar enough to those who are engaged in the duties of the ministry even in the midst of a single flock, may help to give us some insight into the cares and perplexities of one who, besides the heavy duties connected with his own metropolitan charge, had to rule over the clergy and congregations of a whole province.<sup>1</sup>

Then, as to the spirit which he carried into his financial affairs, we may mention that, as soon as he was installed into office, he arranged as to the scale of expenditure at which his establishment was to be maintained. Reserving but a very moderate sum for his own support and that of his household, he set apart the rest—much the greater portion—of his income for religious and charitable purposes. Out of the fund thus provided he built churches, almshouses, hospitals for sick and destitute strangers, and set on foot several missions to the heathen. There are few, we think, who will hesitate

<sup>1</sup> He had twenty-eight bishops under him, with a body of presbyters and deacons amounting to several hundreds.

to acknowledge that this was a more *Christian* way of spending the revenues of his diocese, than if he had laid them out in entertaining the magnates of the metropolis, or keeping an open table for those political ecclesiastics who came to enjoy the society of the metropolis, and to push their interest at court.

But though so simple and so self-denying in his own habits, he was far from being indifferent to the temporal well-being of his clerical brethren. On the contrary, he stood up for their interests, and insisted on their receiving a reasonable maintenance; that, being free from pecuniary cares and embarrassments, they might be in a condition to give their minds fully to their proper work.

‘Those who build fine houses and own large estates,’ he says, ‘never think they have enough; but if a clergyman appears in decent apparel, and keeps a servant, so as not to be obliged to wash his own clothes, there are some of our rich people who look upon him as extravagant.’

And while he showed his concern for the comfort and usefulness of his clergy in this way, he also cherished a very high estimate of the real—that is, the *spiritual*—dignity of his own calling and theirs; noticing with much satisfaction the high influence and importance to which the clergy as a class, and the bishops in particular, had attained. ‘The rulers of the State,’ he observes, ‘enjoy no such honour as that which is accorded to the overseers of the Church. Who is first, if he goes to the court, or enters into the society of the great? It is the Christian priest. No one stands higher or enjoys greater consideration than he.’

But although he manifested a friendly spirit towards his brethren, it must be admitted that he was far from being a favourite among them, or rather, we should say, among a certain class of them. For the political bishops who were constantly haunting the capital, and mixing

themselves up with the scandals and party intrigues of the court, such a man as Chrysostom could have no respect. Nor were such clerical adventurers likely to look with any great feeling of good-will on one whose character was so different from their own, and whose whole life was like a standing protest against themselves, and especially against the ambitious and contentious spirit by which, as a class, they were distinguished. Some of them, who had pretensions to oratorical gifts, were mortified by the archbishop's popularity, and envious of the great name he had acquired as the most eloquent man of his time. But there were other causes besides these to account for the bad feeling (for it amounted to that) with which he was regarded by some of the wandering bishops we have mentioned, as well as by other parties nearer home. This will come out clearly enough as we advance with our narrative. It was the Son of man who said to His disciples, 'Beware of men;' and it was the great apostle of the Gentiles who, in enumerating the 'perils' through which he had passed, both by sea and land, closes the enumeration with this as the last and the worst of all—'in perils by *false brethren*.'

'Like priest, like people,' was a proverb in Israel, and it continues to be a proverb still. When the clergy were setting such an example of lightness and worldly-mindedness before the public, we may easily suppose that, in a community like that of the capital, there would be no lack of imitators. There was, indeed, much profession, but a great want of serious religion, and especially of true devotion, among the church-goers of the time: 'I see the Church,' says the anxious and vigilant watchman, 'lying like a dead body, in which we discern the form of man, but only the form, not the man himself. Thus all the members of the Church are believers—that is, their thoughts have the *form* of belief; but there is

nothing real or vital in their faith. We have allowed the power and warmth of life to depart from it.'

In further illustration of this, we have the following account of the manner and spirit in which these church-goers acted: 'The rich lords and rich ladies come hither with no thought of hearing the word of God, but for the purpose of exhibiting *themselves*; how they shall sit down with the greatest display, surpass each other in the grandeur of their dresses, and attract attention by their looks and airs. The lady is thinking within herself, "Has this and that person noticed and admired me? Does my dress sit well? Are its folds properly arranged?" Then comes the lord, attended by a band of slaves, who clear the way before him. As soon as he has taken his seat, his thoughts fly off to his business or his money-bags; for that which occupies him outside does not leave him when he comes to this place. And yet such persons actually believe that they are conferring a favour upon us, upon the Church, and even upon God Himself, by their mere presence amongst us. Can they get any good in this place? If one goes to the house of a physician, and, instead of listening to his advice or receiving the medicine, allows his thoughts to run on his dress or his money, can he derive any benefit from the physician? These people seem not even to suspect that it is the house of God they are sitting in; they feel no longing, no need of drawing near to Him, when they are here.'

Another extract from these truly photographic pictures will bring out yet more clearly the free-and-easy spirit which these Byzantian worshippers displayed:— 'A fearful distemper prevails in our Church. We should here speak with God the Lord; we should be here in order to worship Him. But instead of that, our thoughts wander away to the mountains of vanity. And more than this, we disturb those who are near us. We take

our neighbour aside, and talk to him of what has happened at home, or in the market-place, or in the law courts, or in the palace or theatre ; what this and that man has done ; how one has lost a lawsuit, and how another has gained his plea. And our lips do not even here cease from groundless and useless complaints against the Government and its acts. Now is this justifiable ? When one comes before the king, he has reverence enough to speak of those things only of which the king wishes to speak ; but thou, when thou comest into the presence of the King of kings, before whom angels bow in humble adoration, dost suffer thyself to be drawn aside to mire and dirt ! Earthy things are that, and nothing more, in the view of God. You say, " But evil so abounds in the world, the government of the State is so bad, that our minds are full of it." Whose fault is this, then ? Some blame the indiscretion and wickedness of our rulers. Believe it not. We ourselves, our own sins, have ruined us, and brought upon us all these distresses and calamities, all our wars and defeats. Should we now, so far as we are able, put in their place the wisest and best men to be found, there would be no improvement if we remained the same. Oh that every one here at least would look to his own case, and accuse himself and not another !

The parties to whom these remonstrances were particularly addressed were the fashionable members of the congregation. It was, indeed, in his relations with this class that the greatest of all his difficulties lay. We have already seen how much he was grieved at the careless habits and heathenish ways of the same class at Antioch. Not that they ever treated him with *personal* unkindness at that place, so far as we can discover. On the contrary, they seem to have been rather proud of him, and some even tried to encourage and patronize him. It is plain, however, that their efforts in this direc-

tion did not meet with much appreciation. By birth he was equal to the best of them, and by education he was probably superior to the whole of them put together, Cæsar’s representatives included. It is true he was only a preacher, without lairdship or lands ; but besides being one of the nobles of nature, he was also one of the children of light, possessing a refined intellect, and living in a lofty sphere ; while the great mass of them were little better than coarse sensualists, rich nonentities, or respectable knaves. Chrysostom was just the man to form a correct estimate of themselves and their surroundings ; and the style in which he dealt with them when they condescended to appear in the house of God, was sufficient to show how little he thought of their pomps and vanities, their ‘gay clothing and their gold rings.’

From what has been said, our readers will perceive that the clerical profession has its own difficulties and trials. It is not by any means the quiet, easy life that many imagine it to be. There are, no doubt, some who make it so ; but these are men who devote themselves to the amenities more than to the *duties* of their office. A spiritual teacher is nothing, if not a spiritual reformer ; and he who meets with no opposition in a world like this, may be set down as one who is exerting no moral influence on the minds of others. His lessons are either without point, or his life is without power. ‘It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master,’ who, though the best and wisest instructor that ever lived, was yet the most bitterly persecuted and the most keenly opposed. Every true servant of Christ has often occasion to remember the apostle’s words : ‘Consider Him who endured such *contradiction of sinners* against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.’

[NOTE.—We are fully aware that the view given of ‘the world’ at the beginning, and which runs more or less through the whole, of this chapter, will be objected to by many wiser and better men than ourselves. But yet that view has been *forced* upon us by our reading of the New Testament, so that we find it impossible to modify or retract it, at least with a good conscience. If it favours the theory of the ascetics, and affords something like a direct sanction to the monastic system—for neither of which have we any great liking, but very much the opposite—we can only say that we are sorry for it, though we cannot help it. Of this, however, we are thoroughly persuaded, that there is enough in the Scripture facts and statements to which we have referred, to condemn those principles of worldly pride, ambition, and *vulgar* ostentation—for so we regard it—which are so directly encouraged by the very constitution of our prelatical Churches. Christ came not to establish a great spiritual monarchy, with thrones, principalities, and powers attached to it. This was what the Jews expected, and what the Romanists believe; but He came to gather a people for Himself, and *like Himself*, out of the world, and to establish a family relation between all the members of ‘the household of faith,’ so as to make them ‘brethren,’ and more than brethren—‘members one of another.’ To such an object, and such an idea, the hierarchical systems, with their titles, palaces, and pomps, are so entirely antagonistic, that we do not see how they can be either logically or spiritually harmonized.]

## XVI.

### TROUBLED WATERS.

*'We know the arduous strife, the eternal labours,  
To which the triumph of all good is given,  
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,  
Even to the death: else wherefore should the eye  
Of man converse with immortality?'*

WORDSWORTH.

FROM what has been stated in the preceding chapters, it will be seen that Chrysostom's relations with 'the society' of the metropolis were not of a smooth or easy kind. He was, as we have already remarked, an inbred reformer, with a very keen sense of right and wrong in all things, but especially in those that bore on the moral and religious interests of men. Being of an impulsive temperament, he was apt to say very strong things when discussing such questions in the pulpit; but there is no reason to believe that he ever was so severe in his practice as he was in his preaching, or so stern in the exercise of discipline as he was in the exposition and enforcement of duty. As a public teacher and 'steward of the mysteries of God,' he was bound to be 'faithful.' In this department of his work he evidently sought to keep himself 'clear from the blood of *all* men,' by 'not shunning to declare unto them *all* the counsel of God.' He not only endeavoured to set forth 'the truth, and nothing but the truth;' but he resisted those temptations which so often prevent the timid and the time-serving from proclaiming the '*whole* truth,' for fear of giving offence to parties whose lives cannot abide the strong, searching light of God's law. So far from 'shun-



ning' the particular topics that told on the conduct of such men, and that made the simple statements of the record look like a direct attack upon their character, he rather felt himself called upon to insist all the more on those very things from which the vicious and the ungodly revolted. It was for them to mend their doings, not for him to handle the word of God deceitfully in order to spare them, or to 'spice their conscience at their soul's expense.' It is no kindness to deal softly with the sins of the foolish and disobedient. Kindness! It is the greatest cruelty, the most heartless and the most scandalous treachery, of which a minister of Christ can be guilty. Let the truth be 'spoken in love' by all means; let the preacher ever bear in mind that he himself also is a sinner; but let him never forget, at the same time, that if he preaches so as 'to please men,' and such men in particular, he is '*not* the servant of Christ,'<sup>1</sup> but of a very different master. Outspoken, however, as Chrysostom was in dealing with the people as a body, he was usually very considerate when he had to do with them as individuals. His actions were always more guarded than his words; and instead of being too hasty, he was, on the contrary, rather slow in taking up cases wherein personal or party interests were in any way involved. Such cases demand a knowledge of details which he often had no time to collect, and from the investigation of which he shrank with the most sensitive reluctance; knowing, as he did, the difficulty of getting at the truth without disturbing the peace and exciting the passions of all who had any connection with the matter, however incidentally or remotely. It was therefore a sore trial to him, when, before he was well settled in his office, he found himself obliged to inquire into the conduct of several of his clergy, in consequence of certain complaints that were brought against them.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 10.

Two of these cases were of such an aggravated nature, that he was compelled to depose the parties complained of; one of them having been found guilty of gross licentiousness, and the other of no less a crime than that of murder. Not very long afterwards—in September A.D. 400 it was—he summoned a synod of two-and-twenty bishops for the purpose of taking counsel with them regarding the affairs of the diocese, and of the province generally—left, as may be supposed, in a very unsettled and unsatisfactory condition by his incompetent and easy-minded predecessor.

On a Sabbath morning, when the members of the synod were met together, and just preparing to proceed to the church, there compeared Eusebius Bishop of Valentinopolis, who presented a petition against Antoninus Bishop of Ephesus and metropolitan of Asia. The petition contained seven charges, all of a more or less serious character. Antoninus was accused of—

1. Melting down the communion plate, selling it, and bestowing the proceeds on his son.
2. Removing a marble slab from the baptistery, and placing it in his private bath.
3. Appropriating certain pillars which remained after the building of the church, and using them to support the roof of his own hall.
4. Keeping a servant who was guilty of manslaughter.
5. Selling lands left to the Church by Basilina, mother of the Emperor Julian, as if they belonged to his own personal estate.
6. Taking back his wife, whom he had put away for the purpose of obtaining the bishopric, and having two children by her.
7. Setting up ecclesiastical offices to the highest bidder [averring that some of the bishops present at the synod had obtained their appointments in that way].

The archbishop, who appears to have known something of Eusebius, observing the very grave nature of these charges, warned him to consider well what he was doing. He even advised him to withdraw his petition, promising that he would himself inquire into the matter, and see that justice was done.

By this time, the hour of service having arrived, Chrysostom and his friends adjourned to the church. But scarcely had the former taken his seat, and pronounced the usual salutation, 'Peace be unto you,' when Eusebius, in a state of great excitement, went up to him, laid a second copy of his accusation before him, and conjured him by the life of the Emperor and Empress (who were probably present on the occasion) to take up the case, and proceed against the offender. Antoninus being arraigned thus openly in the face of the congregation, there was no further any choice left. The synod entered on the matter; but, after deliberation, they resolved to confine themselves to the last charge in the first instance, as it was one which concerned the constitution of the synod, some of whose members were personally accused.

The Bishop of Ephesus was summoned; and the charges being read over in his hearing, he met them all with a distinct and positive denial. Those bishops present who were named as parties to the simoniacal practices alleged against him, also denied that they had paid any money in the manner or for the purpose alleged. It was therefore necessary to go to proof with the case; and three bishops were accordingly appointed to proceed to Asia with that view. One of them, who was suspected of being himself concerned in these transactions, took ill, or at least feigned to be unwell, so that only two of the commissioners appeared at the place appointed. This was the town or city of Hypaepæ, where the witnesses whom Eusebius had engaged to

produce were cited to meet them. But, to their great surprise, neither accuser nor witnesses were forthcoming; and therefore, after waiting three weeks for their appearance, they there and then deposed Eusebius as a false accuser, and pronounced sentence of excommunication against him.

But the matter did not end here. In the course of a few months thereafter Antoninus died, and the city of Ephesus became the scene of a furious competition, or what may be called a contested election, for the vacant episcopal chair. A great number of candidates appeared, and the whole province was convulsed with the struggles of contending factions. In order to allay the excitement and confusion which thence arose, the better-disposed among the clergy sent an earnest application to the Archbishop of Constantinople, entreating him to come to their help at this crisis, believing that his presence and authority might be sufficient to control the parties by whom the Churches were disturbed.

In answer to this appeal he sailed to Ephesus, and landed there, after a stormy passage, towards the end of the winter of A. D. 401. On his arrival he called a synodical assembly, which was attended by seventy bishops. Setting aside all the candidates who had been the means of creating such a commotion, the synod appointed Heraclides of Cyprus, a presbyter recommended by Chrysostom; and by that course the strife was subdued, and some degree of order restored. But if one had reason to be satisfied, a great number were bitterly disappointed, who found an opportunity afterwards of feeding fat 'their grudge' against him who was chiefly instrumental in thwarting their schemes and cutting short their hopes of preferment.

On this occasion the case of the deposed Eusebius again came up. He appeared by petition before the synod, asking to be readmitted to the communion of

the Church, and offering now to lead proof in support of the charges from which he had previously fallen. As there was reason to believe that Eusebius, questionable as his conduct in the matter was, had good grounds for all that he stated, the synod allowed the case to be reopened ; and in the course of the investigation which followed, six bishops were convicted of simony, and deposed from their office. But the heirs of the deceased metropolitan were ordered to refund the money the delinquents had paid,—a sentence by which they got more than their due, considering especially how they denied that they had ever given anything to Antoninus.

Having so far succeeded in correcting the disorders which brought him to Ephesus, Chrysostom returned homewards through Nicomedia, where he was obliged to depose another bishop of the name of Gerontius.<sup>1</sup> This individual was formerly one of Ambrose's deacons at Milan, but dismissed on account of some improprieties of which he had been guilty there. Being, however, a person of plausible address and of good social qualities, he managed, through some influence at court, to get himself appointed to the bishopric of Nicomedia, where, in spite of his faults, he became so great a favourite, that his deposition was anything but a popular step on the part of the archbishop. Pansophius, whom Chrysostom had settled in his room, was by no means well received, and Gerontius never forgave the man who had turned him out of his office and benefice. But this was not all. In proceeding on his journey towards Constantinople,

<sup>1</sup> This religious adventurer practised medicine, and pretended to great skill in the magical arts, in order to gain more influence over the minds of the people. While acting as a deacon at Milan, he used to tell such stories as the following: 'One night I met one of these evil spirits called Lamies. He appeared in the shape of an ass, but I detected him under his disguise, and seizing him by the head, I took him to the mill, and forced him to turn the wheel and grind.' He was evidently an unprincipled charlatan.

Chrysostom discovered that the *Novatians*, and another body of heretics called *Quartodecimani*,<sup>1</sup> had kept possession of ecclesiastical buildings to which they had no legal claim. It was therefore his duty as metropolitan of the province to take this property out of their hands, and to place suitable men in the churches of which these sectaries were deprived.

The Novatians, above mentioned, took their name from Novatian the founder of the sect, who lived about 158 years before this date. They professed great strictness of principle, and separated from the main body of the Church because of the laxity of discipline and the looseness of manners that prevailed in it. It was the ascetic spirit in a different form from Monachism; and no one at all acquainted with the state of the Church at that period can be surprised at these secessions. The Dissenters in question called themselves the 'pure Church,' and were in some respects not unlike the strict communion Baptists, though not holding Baptist views. They maintained that a Christian who, after his baptism, fell into any gross sin, and was cut off from church fellowship, ought not to be again admitted to sealing ordinances, no matter how penitent he was, or what proofs of repentance and amendment he might give. While sympathizing with their feeling to some extent, Chrysostom totally dissented from the principle of exclusion they had adopted, as being equally cruel and unscriptural. He had a controversy with Sisinnius, the leader of this party in Constantinople, and had preached several discourses against them. What offended him especially was the sanctimonious and self-righteous spirit which they manifested. Against this feature of their system he spoke with great vehemence; for, although a Church reformer himself, he was anything but a one-sided and narrow-minded extremist.

<sup>1</sup> Another name for the Protapaschites. See note, chap. x.

In one of his homilies on this subject, he says: 'The Apostle Paul, who sped as if with wings over land and sea, who converted so many nations to Christ, to whom was laid open the very depths of divine truth, who was caught up to the third heavens—did he venture to say of himself, "I belong to the 'pure?'" On the contrary, he declared that he was not worthy to be called an apostle, and speaks of himself as "one born out of due season." What pride, what madness is this! Thou a man, and callest thyself "pure!" Should one call himself pure and free from sin, it were the same thing as saying that the ocean is free from waves; for just as the sea is never free from waves, so are we mortals never free from sin. A thousand passions have polluted thee, a thousand-fold defilement cleaves to thee, and thou darest affirm that in a sea of impure waves thou art "pure!" Who is there that can say, at the close of a single day, he has been pure? Though he may not have committed what we term gross sins, yet has not vanity overtaken him? has not pride ensnared him? has he not hated his enemy, or envied his friend? And they call themselves "pure!" I admonish you to keep aloof from such pride, and to strive with all earnestness to purify yourselves from the evil which still cleaves to you.'

No one, we think, can fail to appreciate the sound, and honest, and healthy spirit that pervades these remonstrances. They show how sensible this enlightened Father was of the sinfulness of his own heart, how thoroughly he abhorred all spiritual pride and sanctimonious cant, and how little danger there was of his being carried away by the bloodless creed of the purist or the raving dreams of the perfectionist. His views on this subject, however, were grossly misrepresented by the Novatian sectaries. They reported him as saying: 'If you sin, there is help; if you sin again, there is a remedy; though you should fall a thousand times, if you

a thousand times repent, the Church of Christ again receives you.' We can see at once the great, broad, evangelical, and merciful truth for which Chrysostom contended, and can easily separate it from the extreme and exaggerated form in which it suited these pharisaical professors to present it. Sisinnius, their leader, as we have said, wrote a book against the archbishop which was full of bitterness and spite, and designed to lower his character and his preaching in the estimation of the public. With all his pretensions to purity, it appears that this champion of the Novatians was anything but straitlaced in his own manners and practices. He was counted a sort of wit in his way, was acquainted with some of the fashionable people of the town whose parties he frequented, and was hand-in-glove with that section of the clergy who hated Chrysostom and haunted the drawing-rooms of the metropolis. There was, in fact, a pretty strong clique of ecclesiastical malcontents, which included (along with these clerical moderates) the leading men of the Novatian, Arian, and Eunomian factions—all banded against the bishop, and working in concert with his enemies both in the city and at the court. The result of this confederacy we shall see by and by.

From the particulars we have given, it will be observed that Chrysostom's visit to Ephesus, with his journey back through Asia Minor to Constantinople, was one continuous scene of trouble and annoyance from beginning to end. The 'perils by waters' with which it commenced, were but a foretaste of still greater 'perils in the city and in the wilderness,' from the effects of which he suffered all his life afterwards. Wherever he appeared, he found himself in the midst of dissensions and disorders grievous to think of; and in attempting to remedy these as best he could, it may be said that there was no place to which he went where he did not leave a host of enemies behind him. Whether he acted wisely



in rousing so many 'sleeping dogs' as he did, or whether he followed the best course possible in every case, may perhaps be doubted; but it is all too evident that the state of his diocese, and especially of the clergy, was deplorable to the last degree. Nor can it be denied that some such remedies as he employed, sharp and decisive as they were, seem to have been absolutely necessary. Though reluctant at first to interpose, he was not the man to draw back from the discharge of any duty, or to perform it in a halting and hesitating manner, for fear of consequences. His courage was equal to his conscientiousness; and in both respects there was not another ruler in the Church by whom he was excelled, with perhaps the single exception of that prelate who came nearest to him as a pulpit orator—we mean Ambrose of Milan.<sup>1</sup>

The reader will no doubt be struck with the circumstances which led to Chrysostom's journey to Ephesus. From the rose-coloured pictures of the early Church which are often presented to us by a certain class of writers, few, we suspect, will be prepared for the scenes which were exhibited in connection with the death of Antoninus, and the filling up of the vacant see of Ephesus. And yet such scenes, so far from being rare, were of constant occurrence at this period; and that now before us may be regarded as but a fair specimen of what happened in most cases of the same kind.

With the view of explaining this, it may be stated that the people still continued to have a voice in the election of their spiritual overseers or bishops. This privilege was one which had descended to them from the days of Peter and Paul, when, as we find, they were entrusted with the choice of *all* the officers of the Church, from the deacon who 'served tables' up

<sup>1</sup> Of whom, as well as of Augustine and Jerome, the present writer, if spared, hopes to give some account.

to the last apostle who was chosen to complete the number of 'the twelve.' Even after Christianity had been established by Constantine as the religion of the State, this privilege was exercised by the laity, though it gradually came to be saddled with restrictions which were often the means of producing serious disturbances. The clergy joined with the rulers in limiting the effect of their vote by claiming a veto on their choice. Nor was this much to be wondered at, considering the gross abuses by which these episcopal elections were generally marked.

The office of a bishop in any of the principal cities had now become one of great influence and emolument. The rulers of the Church ranked with the ministers and senators of the State. They began to compete with the secular aristocracy in the grandeur of their dwellings and splendour of their equipages, as well as in the general style of their establishments and mode of living. Hence persons of the highest rank entered into orders, that they might qualify themselves for occupying an episcopal chair; and when any of the richer sees fell vacant, it raised quite a tumult of expectation and competition among all ranks and classes of the clergy. This feeling took, of course, its intensest form in those places wherein the vacancy occurred, and among the parties who were more immediately concerned in it. The members, or rather adherents, of the congregation were not only courted and canvassed, but actually bribed, by those who came forward as candidates. All the arts of electioneering corruption, in short, were brought to bear upon them, and that in the most open and shameless way; so that we can scarcely blame either the clergy or the rulers for trying to circumscribe the effect of the popular vote on such occasions.

The right of election, claimed by the laity on the

ground of apostolic precedent, can only be safely carried out under the guidance of apostolic principle. It is not, nor was it ever designed to be, a local, but a *spiritual* privilege, conferred on communicants alone, and such communicants as the apostles admitted to sealing or sacramental ordinances. These were persons carefully trained in the knowledge of the truth, and who at the same time gave some credible evidence of their personal Christianity. It was only to electors so qualified that the privilege in question was entrusted ; and they were surely as well prepared to make a proper use of it as 'the landed gentry' of the day, or the self-interested clergy of the district. But in Ephesus, as elsewhere, all who were connected with the vacant congregation were allowed to vote, whether baptized or unbaptized, communicants or not. In this manner a spiritual franchise, originally confined to such as were approved disciples and *bona fide* members of the Church, degenerated into something like *universal suffrage*,—a change which, instead of strengthening or purifying, became the means of secularizing and corrupting the whole Christian body. Lay patronage and mere popular election are both equally objectionable, because they are both equally unscriptural. By the first the Church becomes the tool of the aristocracy, by the last she becomes the football of the mob ; and it is difficult to say which of these influences is fitted to have the most detrimental effect on her character and interests.

But, along with this change in the state of the membership, there was also a change not less marked in the character of the ministry—both springing very much from the same causes. The charge of simony brought by Eusebius against Antoninus pointed to a practice which is known to have prevailed in the days of the later Fathers—we mean that of *purchasing* the patronage or 'good-will' of the metropolitan bishops. This was done by per-

sons competing for vacant benefices. Besides paying money to men in power, such as State rulers and provincial governors, in order to secure their political support, and then bribing the people for their votes, those candidates had also to *satisfy* the chief bishop of the diocese, in order to gain his consent to their ordination. That individual might, if he saw fit, raise objections either to their life or doctrine, and, on the ground of these objections, refuse to ordain them, even after they were actually elected. As the readiest means of removing impediments of that kind, the candidates got into the way of propitiating the favour of these metropolitans by sending them presents of money; and it appears that some of the bishops expected, and in many cases *exacted*, sums (privately of course) varying according to the value of the living.

This was the rule on which Antoninus appears to have acted; and it was proved that no fewer than six bishops within the single diocese of Ephesus had paid for their ordination and admission to office in that way. In the case of Gerontius and others of the country pastors whom Chrysostom found it necessary to depose, there was reason to believe that several of them owed their appointments to the use of similar means. In short, the practice of bribery was quite as common in the East at that time as it is said to be in Russia at the present day. All public offices, whether in the Church or in the State, were bought and sold; and the rulers of both, from Eutropius the prime minister down to the meanest provincial bishop, carried on this sort of traffic as a matter of custom, and almost a matter of course. The fact we have just stated may therefore help to give us a more correct idea than the rose-coloured pictures to which we have alluded, of the state of religion and morals, both among the clergy and the laity, in those halcyon days when the world rested

under the broad shadow of 'the Church Primitive and Catholic.'

In confirmation of what has just been stated, we ask the reader to ponder the following passage. Referring to Constantine's influence on the spiritual condition of the Church, Milton says: 'He appointed certain times for fasts and feasts, built stately edifices, gave large immunities to the clergy, great riches and promotions to bishops, gave and ministered occasion to bring in a deluge of ceremonies, thereby either to draw in the heathen by a resemblance of their rites, and to set a gloss upon the simplicity and plainness of Christianity, which, to the gorgeous solemnities of paganism, and the sense of the world's children, seemed but a homely and yeomanly religion;<sup>1</sup> for the beauty of *inward sanctity was not within their prospect*: so that in this manner the prelates, both then and ever since, coming from a mean and plebeian life on a sudden to be lords of stately palaces, rich furniture, delicious fare, and princely attendance, thought the plain and homespun verity of Christ's gospel unfit any longer to hold their lordships' acquaintance, unless the poor threadbare matron were put into better clothes: her chaste and modest veil, surrounded with celestial beams, they overlaid with artificial tresses, and in a staring tire bespeckled her with all the gaudy allurements of a wanton.'<sup>2</sup>

After showing how the secular elevation of the bishops led to the introduction of showy ceremonies and meretricious displays in the services of the Church, he adds: 'At this time Antichrist began to put forth his horn, and that saying was common that former times had wooden chalices and golden priests, but *they* golden chalices and

<sup>1</sup> It was this that led Charles the First to say that 'Presbyterianism was not a religion for a gentleman.'

<sup>2</sup> Does this help to account for the ritualistic character of hierarchical Churches? The thought is at least suggestive.

wooden priests. "Formerly," saith Sulpitius, "martyrdom by glorious death was sought more greedily than bishoprics by vile ambition are hunted after. . . . They (the bishops) gape after possessions, they tend lands and livings, they cower over their gold, they buy and sell ; and if there be any that neither possess nor traffic, they sit still, and expect gifts, and *prostitute every endowment of grace, every holy thing, to sale.* . . . All things went to wrack by the faction, wilfulness, and avarice of the bishops ; and by this means God's people, and every good man, was had in scorn and derision."'' Along with the testimony of Sulpitius, Milton cites 'the opinion of these famousest men for wit and learning that Italy at this day glories of,' on the subject he is discussing. It is very interesting, in a literary as well as in a religious point of view, to observe how the great British poet alludes to the views of his Italian brethren, and translates their verses. 'Dante,' says he, 'in the 19th canto of *Inferno* hath thus, as I will render it you in English blank verse :

" Ah, Constantine ! of how much ill was cause,  
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains  
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee ! "

So in his 20th canto of *Paradise* he makes the like complaint ; and Petrarch seconds him in the same mind in his 108th sonnet, *which is wiped out by the inquisitors in some editions.* Speaking of the Roman Antichrist as merely bred up by Constantine :

" Founded in chaste and humble poverty,  
'Gainst them that raised thee dost thou lift thy horn,  
Impudent whore ! Where hast thou placed thy hope ?  
In thy adulteries or thy ill-got wealth ?  
Another Constantine comes not in haste ! "

Ariosto of Ferrara, after both these in time, but equal in fame, brings Astolfo the English knight up into the moon, where St. John, as he feigns, met him (canto 34) :

“ And to be short, at last his guide him brings  
Into a goodly valley, where he sees  
A mighty mass of things strangely confused,  
Things that on earth were lost, or were abused.”

And amongst these so abused things, listen what he met  
withal, under the conduct of the evangelist :

“ Then passed he to a flowery mountain green,  
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously ;  
This was the gift (if you the truth will have)  
That Constantine to good Sylvestro gave.”

As the part of Milton's works from which this passage is extracted is much less known than it ought to be, we shall make no apology for the quotation, lengthy as it is ; assured that every reader of intelligence and taste will not only be interested, but even impressed and solemnized, by such an expression of opinion on the part of four of the greatest men the world has yet produced. Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, members of the Church of Rome, felt quite as keenly as John Milton the English puritan, that the corruption of the Church was chiefly traceable to patronage and prelacy, with those consequences in the shape of personal ambition and ecclesiastical assumption with which they are usually, if not invariably, attended.

## XVII.

### THE RELIGIOUS CIRCLES OF THE METROPOLIS.

*'Tisbe loathed and long,  
You smiling, smooth, detested parasites.'*

SHAKESPEARE.

THE archbishop had returned from Ephesus and Nicomedia only to meet with fresh troubles at home. The same spirit which he had encountered in the remoter parts of the diocese was busily at work there during his absence. When he set out for Asia Minor he left an episcopal brother, of the name of Severian, to supply his pulpit and look after his duties at Constantinople. The individual in question was one of the provincial bishops who were in the habit of frequenting the seat of government for the purpose of enjoying the social advantages of the capital, and of mixing with the nobles and great men of the court. Some of those bishops were distinguished for their wealth, some for their family connections, and some for their learning or their popular gifts. These last were held in high estimation among the religious circles of the place. The eloquence of Chrysostom, and the fame he had acquired thereby, could scarcely fail to produce a general feeling in favour of good preaching; and accordingly, all who had any pretensions to professional talents of that kind were anxious to be heard in the pulpits of the metropolis. It was understood that the Emperor himself, and the Empress in particular, were, in public at least, very devout people, and took a great interest in such men and such matters. It was also well known that the



prime minister Eutropius, although not what might be called a regularly educated person, was an immense admirer of sound doctrine and spiritual oratory. In short, the reigning taste of Constantinople ran very much in this direction ; so that it was not unlike the state of Paris in the days of Louis Quatorze, when Massillon, and Bourdaloue, and Fénelon, and Bossuet, used to deliver their famous Lent sermons in the Chapel Royal, and when the *Grande Monarque* divided his time pretty equally between his preachers and his—well—private amusements.

This being the case, Chrysostom found it necessary to select, if not the best, at least the most acceptable substitutes he could find, when he had occasion to be absent, or was prevented by sickness from officiating himself. Some time before his visit to Ephesus, a great pulpit orator had appeared in the person of Antiochus Bishop of Ptolemais, who became for a time quite 'the rage' among the church-going portion of the people. The *élite* of the place, including the ladies and the religious dilettantes of the palace, talked about him and ran after him ; and the fame of the archbishop was for a season completely obscured. This man was held to be quite as perfect in his elocution as Chrysostom himself, and far more polished in his style ; while he was altogether free from those flagrant blemishes of which the more fashionable portion of Chrysostom's hearers always complained, and which detracted so much from the effect of his public addresses. Antiochus gave no rude home-thrusts, and never indulged in those personal remarks about their dress, their manners, and their amusements, which rendered the preaching of the archbishop so offensive to their taste, and often so hurtful to their feelings. He was, in fact, a man to whom they could listen with delight all day long, and whose sermons they would come any Sunday from the Circus to hear—such was his

pathos, his grace, his brilliancy, and above all, his Christian 'charity' and good breeding!

We all understand this sort of comparative criticism, and can judge how much of it was due to the actual ability of Antiochus, and how much to the honest fidelity of Chrysostom. On the last occasion of the archbishop's leaving home, he had engaged the services of another of these episcopal visitors—Severian Bishop of Gabala, who also was regarded as a preacher of some note. Though his talents were not thought equal to those of Antiochus, nor his discourses quite so eloquent, his manner was considered to be more dignified, and his preaching more solid and instructive. Hence Chrysostom preferred him to the other, and committed his people to his care while he was absent at Ephesus. During this interval the stranger became a great favourite with all classes, but more particularly with those who were known to be unfriendly to Chrysostom. He succeeded somehow in finding out the most of these malcontents, and in cultivating very confidential relations with them, especially with the richer and more influential portion of them. By and by a great many stories, by no means complimentary to the character of their pastor, began to spread through the people, giving rise to a considerable amount of bitterness and bad feeling amongst them. In short, this treacherous substitute had made the best use of his time and opportunities for the purpose of undermining the influence of the man who had trusted him; so that when the archbishop came back he found that a large number of his congregation were turned against him, and not a few completely alienated from him. It is difficult to say what Severian expected to gain by acting in this deceitful and dishonourable way. No doubt he secured the favour of Chrysostom's enemies, many of whom were wealthy and powerful, and some of them even of imperial rank; for by this time

the Empress and others at court were known to be secretly hostile to the archbishop, although they had not yet allowed their hostility to show itself in any open or pronounced form. It was therefore something for a man of Severian's character to secure the favour of the great by simply listening to their complaints against his absent principal, and expressing his sympathy with them. Besides the future advantages on which he might have calculated by following this course, he also had the immediate satisfaction—very grateful to men of his character—of seeing his own light shining all the brighter from the shadow that was thrown upon his absent brother's name. We read that 'the spirit which is in us lusteth to *envy*;' and if there is on earth any individual in whom that spirit is apt to develope itself more fully and more hideously than another, it is an evil-minded and bitter-hearted ecclesiastic. For it is no paradox to affirm, that the worst people in the world are often those who, by profession and principle, ought to be the best. If such people are not really good, they are sure to be the worst and the basest of the bad. We have high authority for saying that 'publicans and harlots will enter into the kingdom of heaven before them.' There is but too much reason to fear that the sneaking Bishop of Gabala might have adopted the speech that our immortal dramatist puts into the mouth of one of his characters :

'I sigh, and with a piece of Scripture  
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil ;  
And thus I clothe my naked villany  
With old, odd ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ,  
And seem a saint when most I play the devil.'

Among other people of note whose approbation Severian had secured in this way, was no less a person than the Empress. She admired his preaching much, and was particularly struck with his candour and good

sense in admitting so freely the archbishop's failings, and deploring the imprudent acts and speeches by which he had offended so many of the leading people of the place. The judgment he had formed of the character of his friend was so correct, and the readiness with which he condemned his proceedings so frank and unhesitating, that she was led to take up a very favourable opinion of *him* as a conscientious and sagacious man. Hence she attended his preaching, praised his sermons, and expressed her unqualified approval of the excellent tone and spirit in which he addressed the congregation; so different from the harsh, censorious, and denunciatory style to which they were accustomed. Those sentiments were of course echoed by the officials of the court, and repeated among the aristocratic circles of the city; and the consequence was, that the Bishop of Gabala rose into immense repute with all who had any pretensions to taste, or any claim to fashion and refinement. It was acknowledged, indeed, that his mode of pronouncing the Greek was somewhat provincial, and that his style was not perhaps so clear or so classical as that of Chrysostom; but it was considered, at the same time, that his guttural tones and his Syrian accent rather helped to give greater point to his statements, and to invest them with a degree of raciness that was quite refreshing, and really very charming. But however that may have been, Severian was pronounced to be a singularly shrewd man and a most admirable preacher by some of the best judges in Constantinople. Sisinnius, Demophilus, and all the sects—Arian, Eunomian, and Novatian—stood up for him, and a large number of the orthodox clergy declared that their own bishop might remain away as long as he liked, while they had such a substitute as the Bishop of Gabala.

Among all the other marks of favour which Severian received from the more fashionable members of the

congregation, the most gratifying was the special distinction with which he was treated at court. The Emperor often invited him to his table, and the Empress introduced him to all her confidential friends.<sup>1</sup> Of some of those we shall hear afterwards; but we may state in the meantime, that he became very intimate with Eugraphia, who was known to be one of Chrysostom's bitterest enemies. To her Severian brought Antiochus of Ptolemais, the other individual of whom we have spoken as one of the crack preachers of the time, and who, notwithstanding a very distinct warning from the archbishop to go back to his work at home, still hung about the capital. Though Severian and he were looked upon as rivals in public, they seem to have been very good friends in private. If there was no love lost between them, they were at least united by a bond of mutual antipathy towards the man of the golden mouth, and were both willing instruments in the hands of the Empress and her female conclave for carrying out their underhand plots against the absent primate.

As soon as Chrysostom arrived at home (where he was received with public honours and great enthusiasm by the 'people'), his friends informed him of the manner in which Severian had acted, and of the state of discord to which his parasitical conduct had given rise; urging him at the same time to call the false betrayer to account for the calumnies which he had circulated, and the mischief he had done. But, as we had occasion to remark before, Chrysostom was very unwilling to move in a matter that merely, or at least mainly, concerned

<sup>1</sup> The Empress having given birth to a child during Chrysostom's absence, she hastened the baptism of the infant, that the service might be performed by Severian before the former returned. This course was so unusual, that it was regarded, and no doubt intended, as a marked public slight. For the children of the royal family were then, as they are in most cases still, baptized by the metropolitan. It was not only a fixed rule, but a matter of State regulation.

himself. He despised the whole race of tale-bearers, and relying on his own integrity, was inclined to treat the parties who were mean enough to 'take up' their ill reports, with too much contempt to put himself to any great trouble about them. Hence the probability is, that he would never have condescended to take any notice of Severian's conduct, but have satisfied himself with giving the Bishop of Gabala a 'wide berth' for the future.

But there was another individual involved in these calumnies who was not disposed to put up with them so quietly. This was Serapion, the chief deacon of the diocese. With him Severian had some private disputes about money and other things, and had spoken of him in a manner that could not be allowed to pass. Serapion might have submitted meekly enough to what was said against his bishop, and might perhaps have moralized a little on the subject, so far at least as to admit that the 'best of men are but men at the best ;' but when the matter came directly to his own door—when this interloper ventured to touch *himself* with the serpent-rod of his tongue—then indeed the thing was not to be borne, and Serapion must have justice! Chrysostom thought so too ; and therefore, although in no haste to vindicate his own character, he was resolved to protect that of his deacon. For this reason he sent for Severian, spoke to him of the dissensions which had arisen in the congregation, and told him of the evidence he had as to his (Severian's) personal connection with these. Referring to the case of Serapion, he charged him with making statements that were utterly unwarranted, and using language unworthy of his office as a Christian bishop. Coming yet more closely to the point, he said : 'You and Antiochus are acting the part of parasites and traitors ; your private dealings are well known ; you have both become the byword of the town.'

The 'language' which Chrysostom alluded to was that which Severian had used towards the deacon, of whom the archbishop thought more highly than he deserved. He had not yet found out the real character of this subtle and deceitful Egyptian, and was therefore misled by him in many ways. To this he laid himself open in a more than ordinary degree by his retired habits, and his refusing to mix more freely with the society of the place. In consequence of the morbid and (considering the position he occupied) altogether unwise and unreasonable practice he followed in that respect, he was very much at the mercy of Serapion, who had almost uncontrolled charge of the ecclesiastical and financial affairs of the diocese, and was the mouthpiece of the public to the bishop, and of the bishop to the public. Being, as Dr. d'Aubigne rightly describes him, 'a proud and passionate man,' he was the means of aggravating not a little the quarrel which had broken out at this time between Chrysostom and the faithless brother by whom he was betrayed in his absence. 'One day,' says the estimable historian to whom we have just referred, 'as Severinus was passing before the church with a proud look and haughty step, Serapion, who was seated near, did not stand up, as a deacon should have done in the presence of a bishop, but looked disdainfully at him. Severinus drew near and said, "If thou diest a Christian, then Christ was not made man." Serapion appealed to the witnesses of this scene, and went with them to the primate, where he accused Severinus of having denied that Christ was made man. The bishop judged that, if Severinus had not said that, he had at least profaned the name of Christ, and he forbade him the entry into the churches. These things were soon noised abroad. It was said in the streets that Severinus had insulted Chrysostom, and an immense crowd assembled before the episcopal palace. Severinus became

alarmed, escaped to the harbour, and crossed over to Chalcedon, whither Serapion followed him.'

The Empress hearing of these things, and of the sudden departure of Severian, was much displeased. Not contented with recalling the latter to Constantinople, she tried to prevail upon Chrysostom to withdraw the interdict he had pronounced against him ; but Chrysostom refused to do so. She then persuaded the Emperor to interpose in behalf of her banished favourite, but the primate was not to be moved. Determined, however, to accomplish her purpose, she took with her the young prince Theodosius, and proceeded to the church (in which service was held), where she arrived just as the communion was about to be administered. She rapidly traversed the nave, and coming into the choir, stood opposite the patriarch, who was seated on his episcopal throne. Then taking the child, she placed him on Chrysostom's knee, and conjured him by the head of the grandson of Theodosius the Great to forgive the Bishop of Gabala. Chrysostom was surprised, and hesitated ; but the Empress, still standing, and holding her hand stretched out on the young prince, repeated her adjuration several times in a loud voice. The sight of the young child, whose duty it would be to learn to pardon, touched the prelate, and he agreed to grant her suit.

The circumstances just related—very much in the words of the eloquent French historian—will be sufficient to satisfy any dispassionate reader that the Archbishop of Constantinople had a difficult part to play in the midst of such factions as we have attempted to describe. The behaviour of the Empress on the occasion shows what a light, wilful, injudicious person she was. The scene she got up in the church, and before the communion table, was more like the act of a romantic girl than of a royal matron or a reasonable woman.

But the incident brings out, at the same time, the



great influence and authority to which the bishops of the Church had attained. Here we find the Emperor and Empress of the East pleading in vain with one whom they otherwise disliked and affected to despise—one who had spent the best years of his youth among the monks of the desert, living on pulse, and having no better residence than a canvas tent or a mountain cave. Verily the glory of the Roman Cæsars had gone down very far, when the consort of Arcadius had to appeal to the tenderness of Chrysostom, by placing the grandson of Theodosius on his knees, and adjuring him by the name of that faithful man and noble monarch. And all for what? Simply that she might enjoy the society and the ministry of a mean parasite whom *she* favoured, but who had so foully betrayed and injured him!

The appeal, as we have seen, was successful, but more, we suspect, from the wisdom of the primate than from the effect of the childish artifice to which the Empress had resorted. Chrysostom felt that, as a subject, he was bound to 'honour the king:' considering the public and extraordinary manner in which Eudoxia had urged her suit, he had scarcely any other course left him than to yield to her wishes, without exposing himself to the charge of absolute disloyalty. But besides this, while Severian's conduct involved a question of principle, it also involved a question of personal feeling; and he was well aware that, if he refused to listen to the intercessions of Eudoxia, it would be ascribed to jealousy and private resentment on his part. Moreover, he had to consider what influence his decision might have on the state of the congregation. They were divided on the subject: for while the great majority both of the clergy and the people reprobated the course which Severian had pursued, it was known that a considerable portion of those into whose hands that envious sycophant had been playing—namely, the rich and the powerful—were dis-

posed to defend him ; while the interference of Eudoxia might be taken as an index of the state of feeling at the palace. Under these circumstances, he, on maturer reflection, thought it the wisest, and perhaps, on the whole, the most dutiful course to accede to Eudoxia's request by withdrawing his interdict, and allowing Severian to return to the city.

In addition to this, and with the view of putting an end to those party divisions which the matter had occasioned, he called a meeting of the people, and addressed them on the subject. In that address he said, among other things : ' I have come to speak to you on a subject which may well be spoken of in the church, and that is—peace. It becomes the servant of God to be concerned for the peace of Jerusalem. I come, then, as a messenger of peace, and pray you not to cast him off (meaning the defaulter who was present). For some time past much that we have cause to regret has occurred in this place : there has been much strife amongst us. Let us forget it, and seek to subdue our angry passions. The Church has suffered enough : bring the matter to an end, and let all controversy cease ; for this is well-pleasing to God and to our pious sovereign. If you desire peace, then, listen to my request, and receive our brother the Bishop Severian.' A proposal urged in such a spirit, and by him who of all others had most reason to complain, could scarcely be resisted. Hence it appears to have been agreed to immediately and unanimously ; whereupon the minister and ' messenger of peace' again rose up and said : ' I thank you for complying with my request, and may the Lord reward you for your love. . . . The past is now forgotten, and I trust that no trace of it will remain. We pray God that He may henceforth preserve the Church in peace, and vouchsafe to her the highest, even the never-ending peace of Christ.'

The conduct of Chrysostom on this occasion, if rather beneath him in some respects, was yet very Christian-like in its general tone and bearing. The spirit displayed by him was not only fitted to disarm all further opposition, but to cover his opponents and calumniators with shame, if they had any sense of shame left. The faithless man who had been the chief cause of these disturbances, and for whose restoration to the fellowship of the Church he had pleaded so earnestly, seemed to be much affected. In order, however, to seal this treaty of peace with every solemnity that could add to its sacredness and binding force, it was arranged that Severian should occupy the pulpit on the following day, and deliver a discourse to the people. He did so, and preached on the forgiveness of injuries,—a duty which he urged with great unction, impressiveness, and fervour. But our readers will find, as many of them might easily foresee, that a short time thereafter, when the Empress and her party threw off the mask, and broke out into open hostility against the archbishop, this restored brother—this preacher of forgiveness—whose gross treachery had been so generously passed over, was among the first to stand forth against him, and continued to the last the most rancorous and the most pertinacious of all his accusers! From what has been said concerning the character and doings of this consecrated sycophant, it may be pretty safely affirmed that

‘He was a man  
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,  
To serve the devil in.’

The particulars we have thus detailed may enable us to form some idea of the religious circles of the capital, or at least of the spirit which prevailed among them at this period. They had become gradually divided into two parties or camps, which, for the sake of distinction,

may be named the ritualistic and the ascetic, or, better still, the party of the *magnates* and the party of the *monks*. At the head of the former the Empress now stood confessed. Though long suspected of disaffection towards 'the bishop' (for he was more commonly known by that than by his metropolitan title), she wished to be regarded as a devout woman, and was therefore unwilling to come to an open rupture with him. Hence she thought it better to dissemble for a time; and this she did with less difficulty, as she had a certain taste for ritualistic ceremonies, and was fond of playing at religion in a sentimental and imperial way. She was orthodox in her own views, and very zealous in maintaining the cause of orthodoxy. She was, besides, a regular church-goer, and often gave considerable sums for charitable and religious objects. She was, moreover, very partial to the clergy, and liked to see them at her State receptions and public entertainments. In addition to all these proofs of her religious character, she sometimes took part in the festival processions to the tombs of the martyrs, and was more than once seen walking by night in the company of those city pilgrims who went by torchlight to visit the shrines of the saints and to pray over the relics—that is, the bones, and skulls, and other glass-covered and silver-mounted memorials—of these holy men. It could not therefore be said that the consort of Arcadius was an irreligious woman. Far from it. The public (who as yet knew nothing of her private dealings with Eutropius) gave her credit for being indeed quite a model of piety. For a very little of that commodity goes far, and counts for much, in the case of empresses and other great people. We think it is Pope who says that

'A saint in lawn is twice a saint in lace.'

Hence we find that Chrysostom himself, with all his

sharp discernment in such matters, was, for a time at least, completely deceived by these appearances on the part of Eudoxia ; and naturally wishing to make the most of her example, in the way of recommending religion to the upper classes, he sometimes spoke of her in terms very unlike his usual self, and in fact altogether unworthy of him. 'Amid the multitude of the faithful,' says he on one occasion, 'shines the Empress as the moon among the stars of heaven.' At another time he thus addresses her : 'Men will call thee blessed, in that thou receivest the martyrs, and buildest up the Church ; honouring the priesthood, and driving out the errors of the heretics.' And even after she went so far as to interpose on behalf of a convicted slanderer like the Bishop of Gabala, we find him speaking of her in public as 'our pious sovereign.'

There were some things, however, that came under his notice about this time, which served to open his eyes to her real character. He heard that she had given up a respectable citizen, of the name of Theognostus, into the hands of certain powerful parties, by whom he was pillaged and persecuted, and ultimately done to death. It seems that a vineyard preserved by his widow out of the wreck of his property had been forcibly taken from her, not only with the Empress's knowledge, but by her express orders. There is little doubt that this was one of those plundering plots concocted in the secret chambers of the palace by Eutropius, and the conclave of harpies who wrought in concert with him there, and shared, of course, in the spoils. Chrysostom was greatly shocked when the facts of this case were brought before him, and he therefore sat down and wrote a letter of strong remonstrance to Eudoxia on the subject ; reminding her that 'God had given her the sceptre of an empire, not that she should regard herself as greater than others, but that she might rule

in His fear, and secure to all their just rights.' After alluding to the uncertainty of life in the case of both 'princes and subjects,' and the account that all had to render at 'the terrible day of judgment,' he concludes with these words: 'Restore, therefore, the vineyard to the unhappy widow and children of Theognostus. She has had sorrow enough already. Let this matter be at once ended, and her distress relieved.'

The effect which such a letter must have had on the mind of this imperious and unscrupulous woman we do not require to describe. *Her secret practices were discovered*, and discovered by him from whom of all others she was most anxious they should remain concealed—the bishop of the diocese—her pastor and her spiritual guide. She who had been hitherto believed by him and by others to be so pious and so saintly, was found to be in collusion with the infamous Eutropius, whose wholesale proscriptions and terrible extortions had by this time rendered his name detestable throughout every corner of the imperial dominions. The influence which this affair, and the tone of the bishop's communication, must have had on her sentiments towards him, may be easily conceived. There are none so thoroughly hated by the wicked as those who have either suffered from their wickedness, or been made acquainted with their secret crimes; and Chrysostom had become obnoxious to this bold, bad woman on both of these grounds. She had long been in the habit of traducing and trying to injure him in private; and now that he had detected the nature of her dealings with the rapacious eunuch, John the bishop had need to take care of himself. Eudoxia looked upon him as Saul looked upon David: she '*eyed him* from that day, and forward.'

## XVIII.

### NEMESIS.

'Which way shall I fly,  
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell—myself am hell,  
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep  
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,  
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.'—MILTON.

'Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the  
wicked.'—DAVID.

IN the last chapter allusion was made to the Empress's dealings with Eutropius, and the feeling with which that ruthless plunderer came to be regarded by all classes of the people. Referring the reader to the account formerly given of his early life, and of the means by which he rose to the head of the Government, it now remains for us to finish the narrative of his dark and desperate career, that we may 'behold and see the reward of the wicked.'

How he compassed the ruin of his predecessor, and succeeded to his vacant office, we have already noticed. As regards that point, it may be sufficient to state further, that, not contented with thwarting the schemes of Rufinus, blasting the hopes of his daughter, and accomplishing the destruction of his house, he seized on the confiscated property of his murdered victim, and secured the greater part of it for himself. Having now supreme control over all the affairs of the empire, this man—if man he can be called—entered on a career of systematic robbery and iniquity, such as had never before been heard of even in these times of unparalleled

corruption. In order to surround himself with agents suited to his purposes, the first thing he did was to dismiss the most of those who held situations under the Government, and to dispose of their places to the highest bidder. Among others who were thus sent adrift was Marcellus the chancellor,—a man of high standing in the State, whose office was sold to a Spanish adventurer of the name of Hosius, that began his life as a cook. But while the eunuch had a natural leaning to such people as Hosius, apart from the money he contrived to squeeze out of them, there was a certain class at whom he looked with an eye of deep jealousy and intense dislike. In illustration of this, we may refer to the case of Abundantius, a distinguished officer in the Roman army, through whose influence the prime minister—then a needy slave out of place—was first brought under the notice of the imperial family, and taken into their service. The favour which Abundantius was the means of conferring upon the rising statesman was one not to be forgotten or forgiven. ‘He had been guilty,’ says Gibbon, ‘of the unpardonable crime of introducing that abject slave to the palace of Constantinople.’ When the ‘whirligig of time brought about its revenges,’ the early patron of Eutropius was denounced by one of his creatures, stripped of his property, and banished to Pityus on the Euxine, ‘the last frontier of the Roman world.’

Another individual who was recompensed in the same way, for some good or evil turn he had done this vicious man, was Timasius, master-general of the armies of Theodosius. That individual, who had signalized himself by his military successes, and in particular by a great victory he had obtained over the Goths of Thessaly, was impeached by one of his own subalterns, supposed to be in league with the eunuch. After a form of trial before the Emperor he also was condemned, his large fortune escheated to the crown, while he was himself



sentenced to perpetual exile in a desolate spot amid the sandy deserts of Libya. From such cases as these it will be observed that Eutropius was in a position to attack men of the highest name and rank in the country, and that he did not hesitate to do so when he could thereby gratify the two ruling passions of his nature—avarice and revenge.

Chrysostom hearing of these things, and knowing, from such cases as those of Theognostus and his widow, that there was a regular system of public spoliation carried on by the eunuch and his band of informers and abettors at the palace, he felt it his duty to remonstrate with Eutropius on the subject, and to warn him of the consequences that must sooner or later result from such proceedings. Feeling that it would be useless to attempt to awaken his conscience by pointing out the iniquity of the course he was pursuing, when viewed in the light of God's law, he appealed to the only motive that was capable of restraining a man so utterly demoralized—that is, to the risk of his being detected and brought to account for his conduct. The bishop assured him that such an issue was by no means improbable, as there were grievous complaints pouring in from all parts of the empire, and very ugly rumours circulating through the city concerning himself, the parties with whom he acted, and the secret agents whom they employed to swear away men's lives. Instead, however, of receiving Chrysostom's warnings in good part, Eutropius was offended at what he called his officiousness, and told him that he would find enough to do if he attended to his own business. Surrounded by needy adventurers, and lewd fellows of the baser sort, the insolent upstart was too much accustomed to flattery to listen with patience to the language of truth; and therefore all that the primate gained by his friendly interference was but an increase of ill-will, both on the side of the reck-

less minister, and on that of his royal mistress—the two most powerful enemies then alive.

But fruitless as his efforts were to put a stop to their deeds of darkness, it could not be said that these efforts were officious or uncalled for. The bishop was in reality *compelled* to interpose, because some of the victims of their cruelty had placed themselves under his immediate jurisdiction by taking refuge in the church. Thither they were pursued by the agents of Eutropius, who attempted to apprehend and carry them off. This, however, the archbishop felt it his duty to resist, claiming a right to protect them as persons who had taken sanctuary there. The eunuch, indignant at being thus foiled of his purpose, got a decree passed by which the churches were deprived of this privilege; little suspecting that he himself would very soon stand in as much need of the Church's protection as any of those who had fled from his cruel grasp. Matters indeed had come to such a pass, that no man's life or possessions were safe. Every day, people were seized in the midst of their families, accused of some crime or another, condemned by the tribunals on false or insufficient evidence, and either banished the city, or stripped of the best part of their property in the shape of fines and confiscations. Among these were some of the most considerable men in the place, including not a few of the highest nobles and officers of State. Referring to the sudden changes of fortune which took place in this way, and the consequent feeling of uneasiness and alarm that prevailed among those classes who had anything to lose, Chrysostom spoke thus in one of his public addresses at the time: 'If we look at the present state of human affairs, does it not seem as if society were dissolving into its original elements? Where shall I begin first? The possession of high offices of State? Such things are, indeed, greatly esteemed in this world; but we shall find

more stability in the motes which we see floating in the sunbeam than in these, especially at present. To what are the possessors of these offices exposed! They are forced to tremble before their own friends, before their own slaves, before those to whom everything is venal, before the greed of the vulgar below, and the frowns of the powerful above. The man who sat on the judicial bench yesterday, is hurled down, and stripped of all he has in the world to-day. The poor live in quietness and peace; but the rich are to be pitied! How many of them perish miserably—doomed to death as criminals and robbers! Poverty is now a shield of defence, while wealth is the signal of danger.'

Seeing that this rapacious vulture was not afraid to fly at such high game, it may well be supposed that he would not be very scrupulous in hunting down his quarry wherever he could find it. We have already quoted the account given of him by the poet Claudian,<sup>1</sup> and which is fully borne out by the sober statements of Zosimus, another contemporary writer, who tells us that the eunuch had acquired the most complete control over the mind of Arcadius, whom 'he governed as if he were a sheep or any other tame animal.' Eudoxia probably felt that she owed too much to him either to question or to quarrel with him. At any rate, she kept him on in spite of his desperate villanies, and made herself actually a party to his perilous transactions. Hence we are informed by the same writer, that 'the Emperor being a mere idiot, his wife, who exceeded in arrogance the whole of her sex, gave herself over to the insatiable avarice of eunuchs and her female attendants, who had the greatest influence with her, till they made the people weary of their lives, so that nothing seemed so desirable to them as death.' Such was the state of despair to which the subjects of Arcadius were driven by the out-

<sup>1</sup> See chap. xiii.

rageous experiments of Eutropius and the gang of court plunderers who acted as his private accomplices.

But while the great mass of the people submitted helplessly to this state of things, there were some who at last made up their minds to bear it no longer. As the rulers of the country were the parties by whom this traffic of combined robbery and murder was carried on, the only means by which redress could be obtained was by open insurrection. And such was the remedy actually resorted to, not indeed by the native races, but by those stalwart barbarians who were by this time mixed up with them, and from whose ranks the armies of the empire were chiefly recruited. A Gothic chief, or general, of the name of Tribigild, moved partly by indignation and partly by ambition, left the city, passed over to Asia Minor, and, collecting together the troops that were scattered among the cities of Phrygia, marched back at their head to the capital. Eutropius, alarmed at the tidings of his approach, tried first to disarm this dangerous opponent by large offers of money. Finding that his bribes were rejected with scorn, he despatched Leon, one of his friends and boon companions, with some troops, against him. But knowing that Leon was not qualified to cope with such a skilful commander as Tribigild, he sent Gainas, another Gothic general, after him with all the forces that could be mustered in and around the city. But the two northern leaders were privately acting in concert with each other. Hence Gainas soon returned, declaring that Tribigild's army was too strong to be resisted by any force he had at his command, and recommending the Government to come to terms with him. This negotiation having been entrusted to Gainas himself, it was found that the only condition on which Tribigild would consent to withdraw his troops was—*the head of Eutropius!*

At this declaration, Arcadius was utterly startled and confounded ; but the people, hearing of it, broke out as one man against the eunuch, so that the voice of the capital echoed back the cry which had come from the camp. Intimidated though he was, the weak-minded Emperor still clung to the man who had so long maintained his ascendancy over him. In this crisis, Eudoxia, who was privy to, and had profited by, his atrocious villanies, not only deserted him, but turned against him when she found that his crimes were dragged to the light, and about to be visited with the punishment they deserved. She came with her two children—of whom she made as much use in her straits as any street ballad-singer—and cast herself weeping at the Emperor's feet, declaring that the minister had used insulting expressions towards her, and demanding his instant dismissal. On this the Emperor gave way : Eutropius was deprived of the offices he held, and given up to the vengeance of his adversaries.

In this desperate emergency, the eunuch fled from his house to the Church of St. Sophia, and threw himself on the protection of the archbishop. He had been the means of bringing the latter to Constantinople ; but any claim he might have had to his favour on that account had long ago been cancelled by his insolence towards him, and the countenance he lent to the court party, by whom he had been so cruelly traduced, and of late so bitterly opposed. In particular, Eutropius had come to an open rupture with the bishop on the right of sanctuary claimed by the Church, as we have just seen, and now he was indebted to the bishop's resistance of *his own decree* for the only place of refuge to which he could run when pursued by the avengers of blood. Knowing well the character of the man who had so often withstood him, and so earnestly warned him in the day of his power, he had no hesitation in flying to him as the

only friend on whose courage and humanity he could place any reliance. Eutropius felt confident that he who had never flattered him in the pride of his prosperity, would not forsake him in the time of his distress. Nor was his confidence misplaced. Chrysostom not only stood by him, but, as it were, stood over him, and saved the life of his prostrate enemy at the risk of his own.

While the hunted criminal lay trembling at the altar, listening to the cries of the infuriated multitude demanding that he should be delivered up into their hands, the Sabbath-day came round, and Chrysostom appeared in the pulpit. The great cathedral was filled to overflowing with an excited and tumultuous throng, who came on this occasion not so much, it may be feared, to worship God as to gratify their vindictive curiosity by feasting their eyes on the fallen minister, and hearing what the bishop had to say about him. 'It is always seasonable,' said the orator as he rose, 'but at this moment more seasonable than ever, to exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Where is the glory of this man? Where the halo of that light which surrounded him? Where the jubilee of the multitude who applauded him? Where the shouts with which he was received when he appeared in the theatre or at the racecourse? Gone—all gone! A sudden whirlwind has swept off the leaves and left the tree bare. The trunk stands forth naked and stricken to the roots. Where are all the friends who bowed down to him, who worshipped his greatness, and surrounded him with a cloud of incense? It was but a dream of the night; the morning has dawned, and the dream is dissolved. It has fled like a shadow; vanished like vapour; burst like the empty bubble that it was! Oh, vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Write it on your walls, on your garments, on your houses; write it in the market-place and in the streets; and, above all, write it on your

hearts. We are ever enticed anew by the tinsel of earthly glory, and ever anew it deceives us. Proclaim to all men, at all hours, in all places—at home and abroad, at the table and in the theatre—let every man cry to his neighbour, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity !”

Then turning to the miserable wretch who was crouching at the altar, and looking forth at the excited but arrested crowd like a wild beast at bay: ‘Did I not tell thee that money is a thankless servant? and thou wouldst not hearken. Did I not say that wealth is a faithless friend? and yet thou wouldst not alter thy ways. Thou hast now discovered that it is worse than either—even a murderer. It is this which hath brought thee here, where thou art now shaking with terror. The Church, so frequently persecuted by thee, has opened her bosom to receive thee; while the theatre which thou hast favoured and honoured, and for the sake of which thou hast committed so many crimes, has betrayed thee.<sup>1</sup> The racecourse, after devouring thy substance, has sharpened the swords of those for whose amusement thou hast laboured to provide; but the sanctuary, which has so often felt the effects of thy ill-will, now covers thee with its protecting wings. I say not this to wound thee, or to glory over thee, but that those who hear me may learn where to look for happiness.’<sup>2</sup>

He then refers to the discontent that was felt at the protection extended to Eutropius, and to the cry raised throughout the city for his head; justifying the course which he and his friends had pursued, and declaring it to be the duty and the dignity of the Church to shield the defenceless, and to provide a refuge for those who were forsaken by all.

<sup>1</sup> It was at the theatre that he was first denounced, and the cry raised for his death; though he had been in the habit of laying out large sums on these public exhibitions.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. tom. iii. pp. 381-386.

‘Let it be the glory of the Church,’ he says, ‘to open her gates to her former enemy, to protect the man who is pursued on every hand. Let her in such a cause brave the displeasure of the Emperor, the wrath of the people, the hatred of all. Some will ask whether it is seemly that this unworthy man should touch the altar. Did not the sinner-woman touch the feet of the Saviour Himself? Will ye blame Him for permitting it? Do we not rather admire and praise His love? Ah! if there is a poor man here, let him approach and witness the spectacle which is now before us, and he will never again complain of his lot. No, he will thank God for that very poverty which is to him a refuge from danger, a haven from the storm!’

After reading these most touching and beautiful appeals, no one will be surprised to learn that the immense multitude who came to the house of God that morning breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the guilty wretch who lay there broken and destroyed, were at last fairly subdued. Sobs were heard on every side, and the whole audience was melted into tears. Observing this, the great orator and the noble-hearted man proceeded at once to avail himself of their change of mood for the purpose of saving the life of his wretched client: ‘Many of you,’ he says, ‘are soon to partake of the Lord’s body; and how can we utter the prayer, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” while asking for vengeance on the guilty? We deny not that he has done great wrong, but this is neither the time nor the place for executing judgment, but rather for showing mercy. Let none of us give way to wrath or hatred in his heart. Let us all, on the contrary, beseech the Lord, who loveth men, to deliver him from death, and to grant him space for self-reflection and true repentance. And let us with one mind entreat the Emperor to give one man to our altar.’



'The powers of humanity, of superstition, and of eloquence,' says Gibbon, 'prevailed. The Empress Eudoxia was restrained by her own prejudices, or by those of her subjects, from violating the sanctuary of the Church, and Eutropius was tempted to capitulate by the milder arts of persuasion, and by an oath that his life should be spared. Careless of the dignity of their sovereign, the new ministers of the palace immediately published an edict to declare that his late favourite had disgraced the names of Consul and Patrician, to abolish his statues, to confiscate his wealth, and to inflict a perpetual exile in the island of Cyprus.'<sup>1</sup> He had no sooner arrived there, however, than he was brought back again to Constantinople. 'Dead men tell no tales,' and there were many about the court who were too closely implicated in the eunuch's iniquities to feel secure so long as he was alive. But as they had sworn that he should not be impeached for the crimes he had committed against the people and the State,—crimes in which some of themselves, and the Empress in particular, were personally involved,—he was tried on quite a different charge from any of these. It seems that he had used for his own chariot a certain breed of animals deemed 'sacred,' and which was reserved for the Emperor alone. Such was the charge on which he was tried at Chalcedon, and sentenced to death by the Consul Aurelian.

And thus ended the career of 'the deformed and decrepid' eunuch,<sup>2</sup> who had, from the beginning till nearly the end of Chrysostom's episcopate, wielded and

<sup>1</sup> *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. chap. 32, pp. 495-6.

<sup>2</sup> These expressions, applied to him by Gibbon, are borne out by the accounts both of Claudian and of Chrysostom. The former remarks that there was scarcely any appreciable interval between the youth and age of a eunuch; and the latter, referring to his appearance after death, says that when the paint was washed away, the face of Eutropius looked more ugly and wrinkled than that of an old woman.

wasted the resources of the Eastern Empire in the manner we have attempted to describe. There is not, perhaps, in all history a better illustration of the case described by the wise man than the career of this favourite and prime minister of Arcadius. 'There is an evil,' says the author of Ecclesiastes, 'I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth. *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*'<sup>1</sup> It is another example of the truth of Moses' words, when, in his farewell address to the children of Israel, he said, '*Be sure your sin will find you out!*'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. x. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> Num. xxxii. 23.

## XIX.

### OLYMPIAS AND THEOPHILUS ; OR, THE HELPERS AND HATERS OF THE GOOD.

*'Angels yet hover, doing God's messages among men : that rainbow was set in  
the clouds by the hand of God.'*—CARLYLE.

*'Tell men of high condition,  
That rule affairs of state,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice—only hate.'*

RALEIGH.

IN the last chapter we endeavoured to distinguish the religious circles of the metropolis by dividing them into two classes or parties—the ritualistic and the ascetic ; or, looking at their social connections, the party of the magnates and the party of the monks. Of the first of these classes the Empress was the acknowledged head ; and such as she was in her ecclesiastical views and leanings at least—though not, it may be hoped, in certain of her moral proclivities—were the most of those who looked up to her as their chief leader.

The most prominent representative of the other party was also a female, and one who by birth and breeding occupied a much higher station than Eudoxia had done. This lady's name was Olympias. She was descended from one of the most illustrious families of the time ; her grandfather Ablavius having filled the office of prime minister under the Emperor Constantine. Born A.D. 368, she was, like the future Empress, left an orphan

at an early age, but had the good fortune to be committed to the care of a devoted Christian of the name of Theodosia, by whom she was brought up from her childhood in 'the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Before she had quite attained to the age of seventeen, she was united in marriage to Nebridius, prefect of the capital, and thus held, next to the female members of the royal family, the highest rank in the country. Her husband dying in less than two years after their marriage, she became a widow when she was little more than eighteen years of age. As, along with youth, and beauty of no ordinary kind, she inherited large estates and great wealth, there were, it seems, many distinguished suitors for her hand; but, following the common example of the party to which she belonged, she declined to enter into a second marriage, and remained single during the rest of her life.

The Emperor Theodosius, displeased at her refusing so many eligible offers, placed her property under the care of trustees till she should reach the age of thirty. But being satisfied as to her discretion, by observing the unostentatious simplicity of her character and habits, he put it all back under her own control a couple of years thereafter. Having about the same time consecrated her own service to the Lord by accepting the office of a deaconess, she also consecrated her wealth to His cause; so that, where her heart was, there her treasure might be also. For she was not of those strange Christians who deem their substance more precious than their souls, or who think it right to dedicate the one to God and the other to Mammon.

When John of Antioch was translated to Constantinople, she rejoiced in his appointment as one of the great spiritual teachers of the time, and was prepared to derive both profit and delight from his public ministrations. Nor was she disappointed. On the contrary, the more

she saw and heard of him, the more was she struck with the splendour of his talents, and—what she prized still more—the devotedness of his spirit and the holiness of his life. He was just the very counsellor she needed; for, while he sympathized with her at many points, he was endowed with a sounder judgment than she possessed, and was therefore peculiarly qualified to guide her along the ‘narrow way’ on which she had entered, and to correct those pietistic excesses into which she was naturally disposed to run. Like himself, and like all the earnest-minded Christians of that age, she belonged to the ascetic or puritanic party. But, carried away by the fervour of her zeal, she was not sufficiently alive to the dangers which beset those who strive to be ‘righteous overmuch,’ and who think it necessary to sacrifice the lawful claims of nature to what they regard as the higher demands of the divine life. In short, she viewed temporal pleasures and possessions in the light of so many temptations, and overlooked both the advantages and the duties which are connected with the legitimate use of worldly means. She forgot that there is not only ‘a soul of goodness in things evil,’ but that the evil which comes out of things good lies not in these things themselves, but in the manner in which they are practically dealt with. Paul, the wise teacher of the Gentiles, tells us that ‘every creature of God is good, if it be received with thankfulness,’ and that we are to ‘use the world as not abusing it;’ or, in other words, that the blessings of life are really ‘blessings,’ which we are bound to receive as such, and to make use of for promoting the honour of God and the well-being of our fellow-creatures. It was here that the creed of the ascetics was defective. They ran away with half a truth; and by the way in which they misapplied it, they turned it into a most painful and pernicious error, which not only corrupted the whole body of their

doctrine, but gave a gloomy and unhealthy tone to the whole cast of their minds.

Olympias was a disciple of this school ; but she had not yet learned to 'distinguish between things that differed,' as her new pastor had been taught by experience to do, if not quite perfectly, at least to a very considerable extent. As an illustration of her views on this subject, it may be stated that when the kind and thoughtful Theodosius had first placed her property under trust, she not only thanked him for laying 'the heavy burden,' as she calls it, of managing her affairs on his own officers, but concluded her letter with this statement : 'I have but one request to make, and by granting it you will add much to my happiness : *command the whole of the property to be divided between the churches and the poor.*'

This request will be sufficient to show how thoroughly her mind was imbued with the visionary ideas of the party to which she belonged ; and yet there was connected with it in her case an element of genuine feeling that compels us to respect the motives, while we condemn the principle, on which she proceeded. In the letter to Theodosius from which we have just quoted, she says : 'I have long been sensible of the influence of that vanity which accompanies the distribution of one's own charities, and have been afraid lest the cares connected with earthly riches should tempt me to neglect the "pearl of great price."'

The bishop having passed through a course of inward experience somewhat similar, was, as we have said, the very guide this thoughtful, but one-sided and enthusiastic, woman required. He knew precisely the state of feeling by which she was exercised ; and as she got into the way of consulting him both in regard to her temporal and spiritual concerns, so we find that his counsels were marked by a rare degree of moderation and good

sense. Take, for example, the advice he gave her on one occasion as to the distribution of her charities. In consequence of her well-known liberality, she was called upon for aid on behalf of almost every object and institution in which the Church was concerned, whether in the city or the province, and was apt to give very largely, especially where the applicants seemed, or were reputed to be, persons of great piety. So far did she carry this feeling, that she sometimes lavished considerable sums on certain priests and monks of whose spiritual attainments she had been led to form a high opinion, even when they did not require it. Referring to a case of this kind, Chrysostom says to her in one of his letters: 'If a servant of the Church has enough, do not give him more. Even though he may be a devout man, you should rather aid one whose need is greater, though his piety may be less. . . . What is the use of giving to a man who is not in want, merely because he seems a good man? No doubt we must give to eat to him that is hungry, and all the more if he is a Christian; but do not give even to a Christian, if he is not in want. If he is not poor, and yet accepts of money in charity, he is not really pious.'

On another occasion he writes thus: 'I rejoice in your liberal disposition, but you must join with this good quality a considerate bestowal of your gifts. You have given up, from love to God, the enjoyment of your earthly goods, and have resolved to devote them to the relief of the poor; but remember that you must give account to God for the use you make of them, and that you are not therefore at liberty to dispense them in an indiscriminate or careless manner.'

Among other parts of the ascetic discipline which Olympias observed, were long fasts, nightly vigils, and other acts of self-denial, to which the pious of that period attached great importance. He remonstrated

with her on the injury she was doing to her health by the extent to which she carried these bodily mortifications. Having formerly erred in that way himself, he knew some of the evil consequences likely to result from such austerities: 'Your delicate frame,' he says, 'once accustomed to every indulgence, has been so undermined by these penances, that it is as good as destroyed. You have brought infirmities on yourself that no physicians can cure, and by means of which you live in a state of perpetual pain.'

From these brief hints it will be seen that Chrysostom, as he advanced in life, had found cause to modify some of the views on which he acted at an earlier period. This was notably the case as regards the superior merit of the monastic life itself, with the self-imposed sacrifices involved in it, and the moral value of the discipline resulting from it. He had also reconsidered his opinions on several other points wherein he once went along with the ascetics, such as the questions of voluntary poverty, celibacy, virginity, and other cognate parts of the system.

All who know anything of the early history of the Church are aware of the fantastic notions which prevailed on the subject of virginity, and that not merely among the vulgar, but among the most celebrated teachers of the age. Chrysostom, while sympathizing with the rest of his contemporaries on that subject, still shows his thoughtful discrimination here, as at other points: 'Many,' he says, 'who have taken the vow of virginity subdue their nature in one respect, but come short in another. So far from having overcome the love of ornament and gaudy apparel, they are even more infected with vanity than other women. What good do they derive from not wearing gold, and pearls, and precious stones? There is nothing sinful in the pearls and stones themselves. It is in the love of display, the desire to



attract notice and admiration, that the evil consists. It does not signify whether I seek this by uncommon simplicity, by coarse apparel, by sacrifice and self-denial, or by gold and silk. But such vain women never think of this. They only imagine that, if they act differently from the people of the world, they are good and devout—thus deceiving and being deceived.’

Such a change as we have noticed is only what might have been expected in the case of a man who, while profoundly earnest, was at the same time as remarkable for his shrewd sagacity as for his bright and glowing fancy. Hence, though he began his religious life with a very strong tinge of the ascetic spirit, he gradually worked himself clear, if not of the radical errors, at least of the grosser extravagances, by which the minds of others were darkened and enslaved. Thus, though he himself remained unmarried, and plainly thought that the law of celibacy was binding on all who belonged to the clerical order, yet he was by no means one of those who looked upon that state as essential to salvation.<sup>1</sup> If he did not hold, with the apostle, that ‘marriage was honourable in *all*,’ he evidently held that

<sup>1</sup> The practice of celibacy, founded originally on the physical theory of sin, and derived from the pagan recluses of the East, was introduced into the Church at a very early period. Before the year 200 Tertullian informs us that it began to be considered unlawful for the clergy to enter into a second marriage. In the course of the fourth century they were expected to part with their wives, if previously married, or to observe the law of virginity, before being admitted into holy orders. This was made an injunction by the Council of Elvira, which sat in A.D. 385. In the Western Church celibacy became the established rule before the close of the fourth century. In that of the East, marriage *after* ordination was prohibited, but those who had wives *before* they were ordained were recommended, though not positively required, to separate from them; the penalty being loss of *spiritual* character and influence in the event of their not doing so. The Council of Nice in 325 left the matter in this state. Many bishops in the East were married men down to the time of Chrysostom and later. Among these were the father of Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssen, Hilary of Poitiers, and Synesius.

there was nothing *dishonourable* in it, so far as the general body of the laity were concerned. In proof of this, we need only refer to the many interesting and attractive pictures of family life which he introduced into his public addresses. He loved to depict a pious mother, sitting by the side of her husband at the close of the day, and surrounded by her children. On one occasion he describes such a mother watching by the death-bed of her infant, and resigning back to God with a yearning, but composed and chastened, heart the precious life He had for a season lent her. Unlike the temper of a stern priest or stony-hearted monk, more disposed to accuse than to console the sufferer, he enters with great tenderness into the deep struggles passing within, as she is preparing to part with her child. Speaking of the calm, patient, unmurmuring spirit with which she yields up her loved one to the great Father above, he compares her case to that of Abraham; declaring that, although she does not bind the victim with cords, or bear the sacrificial knife in her hand, she brings to the altar the same faith and the same offering which he did. In another place, when discussing the subject of virginity,—on which the whole of the Fathers, with scarcely another exception (so far at least as we know), held very extreme views,—he did not hesitate to say that the whole virtue of such a life consisted, not in abstaining from marriage, but in the state of the affections, especially in the devotion of the soul to Christ; and this statement he supports by the apostle's words, that *she* is a true virgin who 'careth for the things that belong to the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

Such were the sentiments he laboured to impress on the mind of Olympias, and by which he sought to preserve her from those exaggerated notions that were current at the time, and to which she appears to have

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 32.

been constitutionally inclined. We have said before, what we may take the liberty of repeating here, that Chrysostom was no party-man in any sense of the word. Possessing a mind naturally independent, and being 'no slave' (as Lord Bacon significantly expresses it) 'to the faces or fancies of men,' he thought for himself on all questions of importance, and stood firmly by his own convictions. As might be expected from a person of his finely balanced faculties, he recoiled from those mischievous extremes on which party combatants usually take their stand, and would neither be driven nor drawn into other people's views. Hence he often gave offence to those with whom he usually acted, by declining to adopt certain of their shibboleths, and refusing to go with them into some of their favourite schemes. Though his general principles brought him into closer alliance with the ascetics than with any other party, he often found it necessary not only to dissent from a number of their traditional maxims, but also to withstand and reprove many of the corrupt practices to which they were addicted. The very fact of his differing from them on minor points, while agreeing in their general views, rendered him an object of greater dislike to the more rabid members of that sect, than if he had not a single principle in common with them. They *hated* and reviled him, where they only reviled, without hating, those who were directly opposed to them.

By the influence he had obtained over the mind of Olympias, and the sounder opinions he led her to adopt on various subjects, he gave deep umbrage to the whole of this body. They saw that she no longer thought so highly of their 'hidden wisdom' as she once did; but, what was worse than that, they found that she was by no means so lavish of her funds, or so ready to listen to their plans and projects, as she had formerly been. Many of them had come to look upon her as a sort of

common treasurer, on whom they could draw for any supplies they needed. They knew quite well how to manage her, so as to open her purse-strings to the bottom. She was a lover of good men, fond of hearing them discuss questions of doctrine and spiritual experience, and had such a profound veneration for those who were distinguished for spiritual gifts, real or supposed, that she felt it a privilege of the highest kind to be able to contribute to their comfort in any way. Hence parties who had a design upon her purse put on their best Sunday faces, and their worst week-day clothes, when they called upon her. They sighed, and groaned, and quoted Scripture; related many wonderful legends they had heard of Macedonius, and Paulus, and Anthony, and other sages of the wilderness; told her, besides, of many weary conflicts which they had themselves waged with the enemy, as well as of stiff battles, not a few, with the worldly professors of the town. In this way it was that they succeeded in getting what they wanted. The simple-minded Olympias not only hearkened and sympathized, but sent them back to their cells or convents with kind words and well-stuffed wallets.

But there was an end to all this now, and they knew who it was that did it—it was just the bishop. But how did he come to have so much influence over her, and why did she think it necessary to consult him about everything, till she did almost nothing without his advice? That they were very intimate was well known. There was scarcely a day in which he did not call upon her, or she upon him. This was all the more marked in his case, because he seldom called upon anybody else. But there was something quite as strange on her side. Her attention to him was extraordinary; her devotion unbounded. She watched over his health, his comfort, his reputation, his usefulness, as much as if he had been her son or her brother. She made possets

for his delicate stomach, plasters for his weak chest, gargles for his sore throat. Her house, her servants, her carriages, were all at his disposal by night or by day; and as for her purse, it seemed as if she only kept it for him. He had simply to name any sum he wanted for his hospitals, his missions, or any other of his institutions, and there it was—as much as he chose to ask. This struck them as very strange. Could it be all right? The bishop was no doubt a good man, and they did not like to say. Olympias was a very holy woman, and it was hard to think evil of her. But they did not understand it; and so they shook their heads, and shrugged their shoulders, and felt their minds greatly relieved by these confidential observations. Alas,

‘No might nor greatness in mortality  
Can censure ‘scape; back-wounding calumny  
The whitest virtue strikes: what king so strong,  
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?’

It was through this party, though not by their means, that Chrysostom was at last betrayed into the hands of those who had long been anxiously watching for an opportunity of getting him into their power. That opportunity now came, but in a shape so different from that which it ultimately assumed, that neither he nor they could have foreseen what the issue was to be.

Three Egyptian monks, of the name of Eusebius, Ammonius, and Euthymius, made their appearance in Constantinople at this period. These monks, surnamed the ‘Tall Brothers,’ were at the head of a party who had the dangerous misfortune of casting out with Theophilus Bishop of Alexandria. The ecclesiastical autocrat in question was so enraged against them, that he went after them to the desert with a troop of soldiers, burned down their monastery over their heads, and literally hunted them out of the country. Eighty, out of three hundred, who belonged to this persecuted band, fled to Palestine,

where they settled for some time in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. To that retreat also they were pursued by the implacable Theophilus, who found means, through the bishop of the diocese and other parties, to get them driven out from thence. Scarcely knowing where to seek for shelter, they at last resolved to make their way to the capital, and throw themselves on the protection of the Emperor. As soon as they arrived there they waited on the bishop, to whom they explained the cause of their coming, and the circumstances in which they stood.

Their story, though somewhat long and complicated, may be abbreviated as follows : It appears that the three individuals above mentioned, with another brother of the name of Dioscurus, had formerly been employed in the service of the Church at Alexandria. Two of them acted as deacons, and had the chief management of the Church property there. Observing the manner in which Theophilus intromitted with the funds, as well as the uses to which he applied them, they became so uneasy in their minds, that they sought leave to retire to the Nitrian desert (where they lived before), under the plea that city life did not agree with them. They knew the spirit of the man with whom they had to deal too well, to make any reference to the real cause which led them to take this step.

As a sample of the covetous and unscrupulous character of this individual, we may mention how he acted in the case of the great heathen temple called the *Serapium* in Alexandria. After the establishment of Christianity the Emperors caused these temples to be shut up, but they abstained from defacing or despoiling them of their ornaments, that they might give no unnecessary offence to those who still clung to the ancient religion of the country,—a religion whose history went back beyond the days of Moses and the prophets to the primitive ages of the world. The Serapium was the

most remarkable, both as to its treasures and traditions, besides its architectural magnificence, of all these extant memorials of the national faith. It was built entirely of marble, and its interior mouldings were overlaid with gold. It was also filled with statues, symbolic figures, and votive offerings of the most valuable description, being covered with solid plates of the same precious metal, and crusted over with rare gems—the gifts of countless generations. It may be supposed that this great monument of ancient art, and rich storehouse of costly relics, would not long escape the greedy eye or the griping hand of Theophilus. Hence, under the pretext of zeal against idolatry, and in defiance of many imperial edicts, he stirred up the populace and the militia to attack this temple, rifled it of all its contents, appropriating the best part of the booty for his own purposes. This was but one among many proofs of Theophilus' reckless cupidity, which had excited the alarm of the honest monks, and moved them to go back to the desert.

Shortly after their departure, a circumstance occurred which was the means of bringing about that collision with Theophilus which they had so carefully done their best to avoid. Isidorus, a presbyter of Alexandria, who had charge of one of the principal almshouses there, received a large donation from a wealthy lady (amounting to a thousand gold pieces) for the use of that institution, but on the distinct understanding that the bishop was not to be informed of the matter, or allowed to have anything to do with the distribution of the money. The secret came out, however; and Theophilus, hearing of it, libelled Isidorus, and had him brought up before the ecclesiastical court of the diocese. By showing that he had acted illegally in accepting the money in question on such terms, and by charging him at the same time with a number of other offences, real or fabricated, he

succeeded in getting him deposed from his office, and in cutting him off from the fellowship of the Church. Thus degraded and excommunicated, the poor old ruined presbyter<sup>1</sup> fled to the Nitrian desert, where he sought an asylum with the 'Tall Brothers,' with whom he was intimate when they were living in Alexandria. From what they knew of Theophilus, they were fully prepared to sympathize with Isidorus, and had no hesitation in at least admitting him to the shelter of their roof. In doing so, however, they virtually condemned the proceedings of their metropolitan; and if they supposed that he would take no notice of what was done even by a body of obscure monks living in the midst of the wilderness, they were altogether mistaken. Theophilus was highly indignant when he discovered that they had dared to take into their community the man whom he had cast out of the Church; and therefore, summoning a synod or council of his bishops, he complained of the contumacious course which they had thought proper to pursue. But he was far too skilful a tactician to rest his case on the mere fact of their receiving Isidorus; that might have been defended on the ground of Christian compassion; but he traced it to another and a very different motive—a motive that was fitted to call forth the strongest prejudices of those to whose judgment he appealed. He affirmed that, in acting as they did, they were influenced, *not* by the spirit of *charity*, but by the spirit of *party*. The expelled presbyter was a disciple of Origen, so were the 'Tall Brothers,' and so, he asserted, were the other members of the community to which they belonged. They were all tainted with the views of the writer to whom he referred,—views which were then violently disputed, and held by the general body of the orthodox to be erroneous and pernicious in the highest degree. Hence he had no difficulty in

<sup>1</sup> He was eighty years of age.



procuring the condemnation of these heretics, and in rooting them out of the kingdom.

When the 'Tall Brothers,' who were accompanied by Isidorus, landed at Constantinople, they formed a procession, and moved on together to the archbishop's palace. Their appearance was sufficiently striking to attract public attention as they passed along the streets. Dressed in the skins of the desert sheep, with bare arms and legs, emaciated to the last degree by the sufferings and privations through which they had passed, they presented a spectacle equally piteous and picturesque, as they threw themselves down at the feet of the primate. Greatly moved by the tale of oppression and cruel persecution which they laid before him, the archbishop promised to communicate with Theophilus on the subject; assigning to them, in the meantime, the accommodation of one of the church buildings, while he committed them to the care of Olympias and other wealthy females who ministered to the necessities of the poor. Seeing that the archbishop felt for them, they ventured to ask another favour at his hands, which was, that they might be admitted to the communion. But he, with his usual caution in all practical matters, did not think it advisable to grant this request until the matter was more fully inquired into. He wrote, however, to the Bishop of Alexandria on their behalf, representing the sad condition to which they were reduced, and recommending that they should, if possible, be restored to Church privileges, and permitted to return home.

Instead of sending any reply to this letter, Theophilus despatched a deputation of five persons to Constantinople, who lodged a complaint against them before the Emperor. This was met by a defence on the part of the accused, in which they in their turn brought a number of very damaging charges against *him*—so damaging, that Chrysostom again interposed, warning Theophilus

of the nature of these charges, and of the grave consequences to which they might lead. To this second letter the fierce churchman returned an answer which was quite characteristic of him.<sup>1</sup> Referring to the canons of the Council of Nice, he reminded his correspondent that he was forbidden to judge of causes that lay beyond the limits of his own jurisdiction ; that he was going altogether out of his province in receiving accusations against him ; and that if he (Theophilus) was to be called to account, his judgment lay with the bishops of Egypt, and not with the Bishop of Constantinople.

Notwithstanding the blustering and imperious tone of this reply, it seems that Chrysostom made a third attempt to put a stop to this business, and to bring the parties to terms—but without success. Theophilus would listen to no proposals of peace ; and the monks, confident of their ground, besieged the Emperor with petitions for redress, until he was at last induced to nominate a commission to inquire into the case. This being done, it was found on examination that the complaint laid against the ‘Tall Brothers’ and their associates—a complaint in which the Bishop of Alexandria had got other bodies of Egyptian monks to join him—was groundless and calumnious ; and the judges gave their decision accordingly. This happened in the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Theophilus,’ says D’Aubigne, ‘hated Chrysostom. His reputation offended his pride ; he was vexed to see a man superior to himself in the ecclesiastical hierarchy ; and he had always done what he could to injure him. On receiving his letter, the haughty bishop was very angry ; all his hatred was awakened ; and as Chrysostom belonged to the same religious party as the exiles, he endeavoured to devise some plan, some intrigue, by which he might bring destruction at the same time on the archbishop and on his new friends. He contented himself with replying that the Council of Nicæa had declared that it was forbidden for any bishop to judge of causes which were outside his own jurisdiction. Chrysostom, however, was in the right ; for the same council had added that, in case of excommunicated people appealing against such an act, it was allowed to examine whether the bishop had had sufficient grounds for his action.’

year 401, and so the matter rested until it was again revived by other steps which the Bishop of Alexandria took in the course of the following year.<sup>1</sup>

[NOTE.—It was in the third century that the enthusiasm for the monastic life began to show its strength, and the lonely deserts of Egypt became peopled with thousands, who had withdrawn from the world in order to make themselves more sure of heaven. Some fled to Mount Nitria on the confines of the Libyan desert, some to the island of Tabenne in the Upper Thebais, while others penetrated to remoter solitudes, imagining that the farther from man the nearer to God. And thus this strange land—the land of the mysterious pyramids, the mysterious temples, the mysterious sphinx, and the mysterious river—the land to which the infant Saviour and the Virgin were carried for safety, and from which the chosen people had been brought forth, amidst signs and wonders which yet live in the traditions of the East—had the silence of its barren wastes broken at this period by a phenomenon of extraordinary interest. Thousands had become as eager to reach it as ever Moses and his followers were to leave it. These were the monks and anchorets, the founders of institutions which occupy so many pages in the history of the Church.

The most authentic accounts which have been handed down to us of the monastic life as it was in those times, are, after all, but partial pictures. Indeed, the most opposite descriptions have been given, according to the sympathies of the writers ; and, whether they are on this side or on that, they are partly true and partly false. The materials of which those societies were composed were the most heterogeneous that can well be conceived. Some, smitten with the love of spiritual perfection, went into the desert thinking that, when the world was thus shut out, heaven would come down to them—that when they saw nothing else, they would see truth and God. Then there were others who sought the solitudes of the desert to avoid the sword and the fire. They had no promptings to the life of anchorets ; they were timid, and simply wished to save their lives. In those retreats they found what they sought—an asylum where no friend could betray them, no creditor could sue them, and no enemy could reach them. And then there were those who were affected by the prevailing immorality of the times, and who, shunning the conflict, fled far away, where they found a solitude and called it peace. Together with these there were the indolent, who did not care to earn their bread with the sweat of their brow, and got it on easier

---

<sup>1</sup> To show the vindictive spirit of this turbulent individual, he sent his soldiers to apprehend Dioscurus, the brother who had remained in Egypt, being a bishop. They dragged him out of his church, but he was able to escape from their hands, and to join the other three at Constantinople. Isidorus died at this time, and his death was a great source of grief to those friends who had loved him, and suffered so much for him.

terms in the communities they joined. There were also the vain and the ambitious, who fancied the world would miss them, and think more of their passive than it did of their active virtues.

When we think of bodies of men brought together by these and other yet more varied influences, we can well suppose that such a 'mixed multitude' could have little in common. The pensive dreamer would pursue his vague and fantastic meditations; the timid man would feel thankful that he had escaped the blazing pile and the hungry lions; and he who had retired thither rather than serve in the wars, would console himself with the thought that he had not to fight the barbarians of the North, or sail stormy seas and be sent to 'perfidious Albion;' while the man who had feared he should yield to the licence of the age would find that in his flight he had taken his lusts and passions with him. No single impulse had brought these men together, and hardly one saw himself in another as in a glass. A vessel laden with passengers who are entering some Egyptian port to-day, furnishes no greater diversity in unity than existed in the mountain cloisters of Nitria.

The monks sung psalms and hymns by the hour; they read the Scriptures; they were supposed to spend several hours each day in prayer; while for bodily exercise they made little gardens in the wilderness, or caught fish in the neighbouring waters, or baked bread, and mended their decaying garments. They were under the rigid control of their superior, to neglect whose most arbitrary behests was grievous sin. The practice of silence must have offended many of them, and their whole manner of life—so contrary to nature and the constitutions God has given us—created for them enemies more dangerous, perhaps, than those from whom they had fled. They were avowedly devoted to a life of reflection, for which most of them were entirely unfit, having little education, no studious habits, or no natural aptitudes. The system was a stupendous act of folly, and yielded its own fruit. Individuals who found a temporary retreat among the monks, reaped the benefit, and returned to the world, as Chrysostom did, stronger for the battle; but for those who had vowed a perpetual exile from society, and expected in this retirement the *summum bonum* of life, the result could not be doubtful. The fanatical saw visions and dreamed dreams; the idle were content to fold their hands; the faint-hearted were content to live. Those who fled from the vices of the world fought with wild beasts still; those who looked for the bliss of Eden saw the trail of the serpent; and for the burden they thought to lay aside, a heavier was bound upon their shoulders.

In general, they were not cleanly, and they were not godly. Freedom of thought was crushed in them; talents were wasted; superstition reigned. The more ambitious sought glory by mortifications of the flesh, by fasting, by exposure of their persons to scorching suns, by forcing the body into the most painful and unnatural attitudes. Some rivalled the silence of the owl, some grazed like oxen on the pastures, and some surpassed the fierceness of lions. With many, the passions, pent up, swelled like the Nile in spring;

with others, the heart, having nothing to feed upon, found its fittest picture in the sand. Some saw demons in their sleep, and started up in terror; other, saw angels of mercy hover round them, and awoke to find it but a dream. Some crouched in their huts while their hearts were back upon the world; some sang to beguile their tedium; and some thought to sing themselves into heaven.

This state of things could not have lasted long, unless there had been much to sustain their enthusiasm. The world, they knew, wondered at their austerities and holiness. Multitudes flocked to them to augment their numbers. Gold flowed in on them. These pious men, who had renounced all, must be provided for. Their judgments upon the great questions of the day were as the sentence of God. Eminent men among them were asked to occupy commanding positions. The men who only drank water, who abstained from flesh, and lived on twelve ounces of bread a day; who saw in boiled vegetables a sinful indulgence; who slept on the ground with a coarse blanket, and had a few palm leaves tied together to serve whether for a pillow by night or a seat by day; who were so indifferent about their garments, that they wore anything or nothing; who used linen when it was cheap, and despised it when it was dear; who gave to strangers what they denied to themselves; who covered their eyes, lest they should behold vanity; who rose at dead of night to say their prayers, and often spent sleepless nights in order to praise the Lord; who spent months, and sometimes years, without conversing with their fellows;—these men earned a reputation with thousands which threatened to cast into the shade the glory of apostles. The martyrs who had before that died for the faith, were lost sight of in the splendour which surrounded the men of the desert; and it was the popular thing to follow them to their retreat, to go with no empty hand, to swell their numbers, and to share their glory. It was thought their touch could cure diseases, their word could cast out devils, their faces could scare the wild beasts of the forest—that they could walk into the fire, and not be burned—that the crocodile waited to carry them across the Nile—that they could make iron float upon the bosom of the water—that they could raise the dead—that the several powers of nature yielded to these holy men. The prodigies they were accredited with performing—the reverence they inspired—the crowds that followed them—the gifts that were pressed on them—the vanity that inflated them—the visions of celestial glory that misled them—the superstition that sustained them—the committing themselves to vows which they could not break, and the escaping trials which they feared to face,—will explain the life in the desert, and the charms with which it seemed invested.]

D. N.

## XX.

### COUNCIL OF THE OAK.

‘ O Envy ! hide thy bosom—hide it deep ;  
I thousand snakes, with black envenomed mouths,  
Blest there and hiss, and feed through all thy heart !’

POLLOK.

‘ I have seen the twisted in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree : yet he passed away, and lo, he was not : yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.’—DAVID.

THEOPHILUS of Alexandria belonged to a class of ecclesiastics who have not only left their mark on the history of the Church, but have done much to stamp their own image on its face and character. Animated by a spirit the very reverse of that which their Master displayed, their ruling passion is a love of power. This disposition, usually born with them, is secretly fostered by a firm belief in their own superiority to others, and may therefore be called an inherent vice, strengthened by the dominant influence of pride and self-sufficiency. The men of whom we speak are a compound of the Pharisee and the Philistine,—that is to say, they are Pharisees in principle and Philistines in practice. Thinking so very highly of themselves, and so very humbly of their neighbours, they feel as if they had a *right* to rule,—as if God and nature meant that they should,—as if the Church and the world would both go wrong if they did not. With such views of their own peculiar importance, they are not very patient of contradiction, and are apt to be intensely astonished if any one ventures to question their wisdom or to oppose their will. Such a

thing they regard as sheer presumption, which they are prepared to 'put down' on the spot ; for 'bitterness and malice' are among the common accompaniments of this species of pride. Some, however, who are more cautious and self-controlled, learn to suppress their emotions, and to maintain their power by the arts of policy ; craft being another of the marking features by which the spirit of ambition may be recognised.

It is marvellous how this class of men succeed. Many believe in them simply because they believe in themselves. Others follow them, in order to escape their enmity, or to secure their patronage, or to share their power ; while the rank and file, consisting generally of the younger or the 'weaker brethren,' support them, because, like certain animals, they cannot move without leaders, or bell-wethers, to guide their stammering judgments and their stumbling feet. And thus, by the corrupt selfishness of some, and the contemptible sycophancy of others, these men succeed in securing what they want—the liberty of ruling and domineering over those who are officially their equals, and many of whom are intellectually and morally their masters. But the leaders in question seldom 'see themselves as others see them.' Hence they often labour under the pleasing delusion that they are making great sacrifices, and doing God service, while thus struggling to get the mastery of their neighbours, and to strut about 'dressed in a little brief authority.' 'Where ambition,' says Hume the historian, 'can be so happy as to cover its enterprises, even to the person himself, under the appearance of principle, it is the most incurable and inflexible of all human passions.'

It is certainly not easy to see how this spirit can comport with such sayings as these : 'I am among you as he that serveth.' 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' 'When thou art bidden to a feast, take

the lowest room.' 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; do not ye after their works. They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.' It was to His apostles that the sayings now quoted were addressed by our Lord Himself. But, looking at the way in which certain of those who claim to be the successors of the apostles are still acting, one would not suppose that such principles of Christian ethics were ever laid down by the great Founder of the Christian faith.

It is but fair to state, however, that the Bishop of Alexandria, while possessing all the characteristic vices by which this class of Church leaders are marked, exhibited these on something like a colossal scale. He was a great man in his way, but there was plainly a dash of the monster in him. Isidore of Pelusium calls him 'Lithomanus,' because of his love of building magnificent edifices, and 'Chrysolater,' on account of his insatiable hunger for gold. It may, however, be noticed here, that though bold and unscrupulous in his general character, he was not without a considerable share of those diplomatic qualities for which political churchmen of the same stamp have always been more or less famous. Thus, when Theodosius and Maximus were fighting for the possession of the Western Empire, he despatched an envoy to Rome with rich presents, of which he had literally 'spoiled the Egyptians;,' but his messenger (Isidorus) was instructed to wait the issue of the war before he delivered them, and then to hand over his presents and letters of congratulation (addressed to each of the combatants) to the one who proved to be victorious! As another instance of his proficiency in this line of business, we may refer to the course pursued by



him in the Origenistic controversy. He began his career as a disciple of the great Alexandrian commentator; but finding that the monks in the Scetic desert (who were anthropomorphists<sup>1</sup>) were dissatisfied with his sentiments on that subject, he turned round, after his quarrel with the Nitrian monks, and adopted their views. His object in doing so was to secure their support against the latter, who held the more enlightened opinion of Origen on the question of the divine personality. Not contented with that, he made use of the whole party opposed to Origen on this and on other points, for the purpose of carrying out his designs against the 'Tall Brothers,' and especially against his envied and hated rival, the patriarch of the imperial see.

Although we have already attempted to give the reader some idea of those monastic communities with which the 'Tall Brothers' were connected, it may help to throw a little more light on this part of our narrative if we refer to the circumstances in which they originated. So far from being the creation of scheming ecclesiastics, as many suppose, they rather grew up gradually and undesignedly; forced, as it were, into existence by the condition of the Church during the first three centuries. It is not easy to fix the date at which the system developed itself into the definite shape which it ultimately assumed, but it was not till about the beginning of the third century that any clear traces of regular monastic communities can be discovered. They arose at first out of the persecutions to which the Christians

<sup>1</sup> The Scetic monks held that God the Father existed in a human shape. They explained the words, 'In the image of God created He man,' as designed to refer to the body as well as the soul. The Nitrian party, on the other hand, having a larger number of educated and intelligent men among them, maintained the essential spirituality of the divine nature. We have no evidence, however, that they followed Origen into those doubtful, if not dangerous, speculations which are being revived by some at the present day.

were exposed under the heathen Emperors. These were not only driven from city to city, but compelled in many cases to flee into the wilderness from the rage of their enemies. There, like their suffering brethren under the old covenant, 'they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins,' seeking refuge from the fury of the oppressor 'in mountains and in deserts, and in dens and caves of the earth.' The sepulchres of Palestine and the catacombs of Rome yet remain to show the sort of hiding-places to which they were obliged to run for protection.

But when the storm of persecution blew over, many had become so much attached to the free life of the desert, that they had no desire to return to their former habitations. Some of them were no doubt aware that, if they did return, they would find the scenes they had left more desolate than the wilderness in which they lived,—their homes deserted, their families scattered, their best friends all dead and gone. In this way it was that eremitism first began, and we can easily imagine how it expanded and became consolidated into the form of monasticism. The dwellers in the wilderness were gradually joined by voluntary exiles from the towns, consisting chiefly of individuals who were impelled either by outward disappointments or by spiritual trials to turn away from the world, and to seek among the solitudes of nature that peace of mind which they failed to find in the society of men. Such a practice, once established, would soon enlist the sympathies of many followers.

But there was one class in particular on which it laid a strong hold—the class, we mean, of ascetics, who made their appearance about the beginning of the third century, and soon became a large and influential body. The chief cause which led to the formation of this party was the presence of heathenism, and the influence it had on the members of the Church. That influence, as may

well be supposed, was anything but salutary. In the case of those whose religion was merely a matter of form, it was found to be utterly demoralizing, as they continued to lead a heathen life under the name and character of Christian disciples. This naturally wounded the conscience of the more zealous, who withdrew to the desert rather than continue to hold fellowship with them, or to be made in any way partakers of their sins. Of course they were still more dissatisfied with the spiritual rulers of the Church, whose want of faithfulness, as they believed, had led to this state of things. They were therefore the less reluctant to exchange the doubtful benefit of their ministry for the silent Sabbaths and the solitary meditations of the wilderness. It will then be observed that this institution owed its rise, if not entirely, yet very mainly, to a kind of ascetic or *puritanic* revolt. The first monks were in reality a set of ecclesiastical *reformers*, and the whole monastic system sprang out of a *lay* movement against the declining spirit of the clergy and the increasing corruptions of the Church.

How strange to think that an institution, which has since been converted into one of the chief props of the papal system, should have been in its origin a protest against the very principles *then* rising into the ascendant, of which that system is *now* very much the organized embodiment! Here, then, we have another example of Samson's riddle read backwards: 'Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was by the skilful diplomacy of Gregory the Great that this breach was healed, and the extraordinary result we have just mentioned brought about. He resolved not only to disarm, but to utilize, this body of dissenters, by giving them an ecclesiastical position as home and foreign missionaries; and having thus brought them under the direct control of the Church, they became in the course of time the most efficient defenders of that cause against which they were the first to stand out!

It is only just, however, to state that, at the time of which we speak, the monks contained among them a large portion of all that was highest and purest in the inner life of the Church. The testimony of such men as Chrysostom, Augustine, and Jerome, yea, even of such keen opponents of the monastic order as Vigilantius and Jovinian, is quite sufficient to prove that these visionary recluses were in the main not only a thoroughly devoted, but in some respects a very remarkable race of men.

Coming more closely to the case before us, it may be observed that it was in the land of Egypt, and more particularly in that desolate tract which lies between the Nile Valley and the mountains of Libya, that the great bulk of those fugitives first took up their abode. There they created for themselves a world out of the world. The Scetan and Nitrian deserts soon came to be dug and dotted all over with cells and convents.

The reputed father of Monachism was Anthony of Coma, in the Thebaid. His education was of the simplest kind, as the only language he knew was his native Coptic. Through that medium, however, he became acquainted with the Scriptures, and was regarded as a person of peculiar holiness. Anthony was a man of many temptations and fierce conflicts with evil spirits. He became so renowned for his ascetic, and especially his anti-diabolic feats, that great numbers joined themselves to him, so that even the soundless sands of Libya broke into life with the multitude of his disciples. Among his other attainments, it was believed that he had the power of working miracles; and when he appeared in Alexandria, in the year 352, to counteract the spread of Arianism, the pagans (priests and people) flocked to the church to see 'the man of God.' Those among them who were labouring under disease pressed forward to touch his garments, in the full belief that there was healing virtue in them. He was then a hundred years

old; and it is said that more pagans were converted during the few days he remained in Alexandria than for a long time before. These details, given on no less authority than that of Athanasius,<sup>1</sup> are confirmed by Synesius, who was himself a pagan at that time.<sup>2</sup> We may state further, that Constantine and his sons corresponded with him, and called him their 'spiritual father.' Jerome, however, contends that Paul, another Egyptian whose life he has written, is entitled to be regarded as the real founder of this system. Be that as it may, it was from these remote and dreary regions that the strangers came, whose visit was the occasion, if not the immediate cause, of Chrysostom's deposition and banishment.<sup>3</sup>

Resuming our narrative, we have to mention that, in the course of the year following that to which the last chapter refers, another individual appeared at Constantinople, who was the means of re-awakening the controversy which had been set at rest by the sentence of the imperial judges. The person to whom we refer was Epiphanius Bishop of Cyprus, who had a feeling that amounted to something like a craze against Origen and his followers. Theophilus, aware of this weakness on the part of a man otherwise honest and well-meaning, stirred him up to visit the capital by filling his mind with the idea that the 'Tall Brethren' were busily engaged in spreading their Origenistic doctrines through

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Dion. ed. Petav. f. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Palladius, who visited the Egyptian cloisters about this time, found in that of Panopolis, containing 300 monks, 15 tailors, 7 smiths, 4 carpenters, 12 camel-drivers, and 15 tanners. Each cloister had its steward (*oikonomos*), who provided for the bodily wants of the community, and with whom the fabrics when finished were deposited. These fabrics were shipped to Alexandria, where they were sold, and the proceeds laid out in the purchase of such stores as the cloister needed. Whatever remained over was distributed among the sick and destitute fellahs of the country. See Pallad. *Lacrise*, c. xxxix.

the religious circles of the metropolis, supported by the sympathy of the bishop and other leading members of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Chrysostom, hearing of the arrival of Epiphanius, who was a person of considerable reputation among the orthodox, invited him to his house, and offered him apartments there so long as he remained in the city. But the Bishop of Cyprus, whose naturally bigoted mind had been thoroughly poisoned by the scheming metropolitan of Alexandria, not only declined Chrysostom's invitation, but declared at the same time that he would take no part in the public services of his congregation till the 'Tall Brothers' were banished out of the diocese, and their heresies exposed and suppressed. Carried away by his zeal, this foolish and intemperate individual announced his intention to appear at one of the churches (that of the Apostles) on the following Sunday, for the purpose of publicly condemning the errors of Origen, and excommunicating the Egyptian monks, with all their adherents and abettors, whoever they might be.

As he was proceeding to the church with that view, he was met by Serapion the deacon, who delivered to him a message from the archbishop, cautioning him to take care what he was doing. It seems that he had already ordained a deacon since he came, and also celebrated the Eucharist, without asking or obtaining permission from the ordinary. As these acts were not only contrary to order, but to the express language of the canons, Epiphanius was warned that he would be called to account for his irregularities. Besides, in taking upon him to excommunicate the Nitrian monks, he was,

<sup>1</sup> This fanatical dotard went to Jerusalem a short time before this to preach against the doctrines and disciples of Origen. Two of these disciples were Jerome and Rufinus, who both exerted themselves to revive the name and writings of the famous Alexandrian in Palestine.

though not aware of it, going in opposition to the public feeling of the capital; and should he persist in his intention, he was given to understand that the people were likely to take the matter into their own hands, and that he (Chrysostom) would not be answerable for the consequences.

Alarmed, as he had some reason to be, at the nature of this message, the rash man was brought to a sudden stand; and, on reflection, he thought it wiser to abandon his design. After this, the 'Tall Brothers' called upon him, complained of his condemning without hearing them, and assured him that they did not behave in that manner towards him; but had, on the contrary, defended him everywhere against those who disapproved of certain opinions supposed to be held by him. Finding that he had been deceived by Theophilus both as to the character and sentiments of these men, Epiphanius not only made up his mind to proceed no further, but, as if ashamed of what he had already done, he resolved at once to leave the city. On his way to the ship he was accompanied by one of the clergy of the place, to whom he said, as he was stepping on board, 'I leave to you the town, the palace, the theatre, and—hypocrisy.' The poor old man never reached his home. Disheartened and humiliated by the use that Theophilus had made of him, and by the troubles and annoyances in which he had involved him, he took sick, and died at sea, at the age of a hundred years.

With his departure some degree of quiet was again restored, but it was not of long continuance. For in the course of the next year, another storm, worse than any that had gone before it, broke out; and this time it was diverted from Theophilus, who had, indeed, the direction of it pretty much in his own hands, and came with all its force on the head of Chrysostom. The cause which gave rise to it was a homily which the

latter preached on the disorderly habits of women. The Empress believing that some of his statements were levelled at her, and feeling, whether or not, that their application to her case was too close to be mistaken, became furious, complained to her imbecile husband of the public insult offered to her, and persuaded him to send for the Bishop of Alexandria, that she might consult with him on the subject. She knew, of course, how the Egyptian primate felt towards Chrysostom; she was also aware of his consummate skill in framing libels and managing ecclesiastical synods; and she had therefore no difficulty in perceiving that, if there was any one better qualified than another to serve her present purpose, Theophilus was the man. And as to him, this was just the opportunity that he wanted, and had long been waiting for, with all the impatience of smothered resentment and baffled hate.

Hence, no sooner did the Emperor's order demanding his presence at Constantinople reach him, than, like Job's war-horse, he 'smelt the battle afar off,' and concluded that the day of vengeance was now come. Along with the imperial message, he had private letters from some of the agents whom he always kept at the capital watching over his interests, informing him fully of what had taken place, and of the state of mind in which Eudoxia was. Choosing twenty of his bishops on whom he could depend to accompany him, he said, as he was leaving Alexandria along with this band of trusty followers, 'I am going to depose the Bishop of Constantinople.' This was about the beginning of the year 403.

Chrysostom, though, no doubt, aware of the purpose for which he came, had caused a suite of rooms to be prepared for him at the episcopal residence, which he was invited to occupy on his arrival. The invitation was of course declined, and Theophilus and his friends



were conducted to a set of State apartments in one of the wings of the palace. Knowing, however, the strong feeling of admiration and attachment with which the archbishop was regarded by the common people of the city, and being somewhat apprehensive as to the security of his person, he soon quitted his imperial quarters, and crossed over to Chalcedon, where he found safer, if humbler, accommodation for himself and his friends.

After concerting measures with Eudoxia, Theophilus called a council, known in history as the Council of Chalcedon, or of 'The Oak,' for the purpose of inquiring into the various charges and complaints against the archbishop. The managers of this impeachment arranged that the meeting should be held out of the city, on the other side of the Straits, for fear of the people breaking in upon them and putting a stop to their proceedings. The place last named was fixed upon, as the Bishop of Chalcedon, within whose diocese it lay, was one of Chrysostom's enemies, and an active associate in this movement against him. 'The Oak' was a country-seat belonging to the prefect of the Eastern Empire. It consisted of a church and mansion, both built and richly adorned with the dishonest gains of Eutropius, and was therefore no unfitting scene for the purpose in view.

The council, or synod, as it is sometimes called, was attended by thirty-six bishops, of whom twenty-nine were from Egypt, and only seven from the defendant's diocese of Thrace,<sup>1</sup> while a majority of this latter body consisted of those bishops who had either been deposed by him, or at open enmity with him. Among them were Severian Bishop of Gabala, Antiochus Bishop of Ptolemais (the fashionable preacher whom he had ordered

<sup>1</sup> Though it appears from Photius that forty-five bishops subscribed the sentence of the synod, there is reason to believe that some of these were the names of parties who were either not present or not qualified, by deposition or otherwise, to act, but who were persuaded to endorse its proceedings.

home to his flock), Gerontius of Nicomedia, and some others of the same stamp. Before this synod Chrysostom was solemnly arraigned. There was produced a libel against him, containing forty-seven counts, or charges, of which these may be taken as a sample :

1. That he had called the clergy corrupt, dishonourable, and worthless men.

2. That, by his command, one John, a monk, was beaten, loaded with irons, and treated like a madman.

3. That he had called Epiphanius a dotard and a devil.

4. That he had excited strife against Severian.

5. That he received women alone, sending every one else out of the room, and closing the door.

6. That no one knew what he did with the revenues of the church.

7. That he did not pray before leaving his house to enter the church.

8. That he neglected the duty of hospitality, and yet in private led the life of a glutton.

9. That in the Church of the Apostles he struck Manmon on the mouth till the blood gushed out, and yet went on to consecrate the Eucharist.

10. That he robed and disrobed himself in the bishop's seat, and that he ate wafer-cakes there.

11. That he was guilty of high treason in preaching against the Empress, etc.

These are some of the leading charges brought against him in the first or principal indictment, to which were added a number of others in a separate bill presented by a monk of the name of Isaac. Among the accusations embodied in this bill were the following :

1. That he used expressions in his sermons that were unbecoming the house of God.

2. That he encouraged in sinners the hope of security, by saying that, as often as they sinned, God would heal their sins if they only repented.

3. That he blasphemed in the church, seeing he affirmed that Christ was not heard in His prayer because He did not pray aright.

4. That he often took the part of pagans, who did so much injury to the cause of Christ.

5. That he encroached on the jurisdiction of foreign bishops.

6. That he encouraged the people to rebellion even against the holy synod.<sup>1</sup>

During the course of these proceedings there were many private conferences between the Egyptian leader and the various bodies of malcontents who had combined their forces against Chrysostom. Skiffs were passing to and fro at all hours between Chalcedon and the Golden Horn, with a constant succession of messages and missives of various kinds to different parts of the town. A great man and a mighty was Theophilus in these days. He was a frequent guest at the imperial table, where he was treated with great distinction by the royal puppet, who reigned but did not rule, as well as by the bold and mischievous dame who both ruled and reigned. The place at which they usually met for consultation was the house of Eugraphia, a lady to whom we have alluded in a former chapter. She had a very keen recollection of certain private remarks which the archbishop had made to her on the subject of dress and decency. Along with Eudoxia and Eugraphia were two other court ladies, of the names of Marsa and Castricia. These old friends and trained disciples of Eutropius sat together in secret conclave, collecting materials for the indefatigable Theophilus, and guiding the movements of their fashionable friends throughout the city—not overlooking Isaac the

<sup>1</sup> A bishop and deacon accused the Archbishop of Constantinople; but the frivolous or improbable nature of the forty-seven articles which they presented against him may justly be considered as a fair and unexceptionable panegyric.—*Decline and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 505, edit. 1868, London.

Jew, with the tribe of ill-used monks whose supplies the archbishop had stopped, or whose pious maraudings he had felt it his duty to restrain. The precognitions having been taken, and all the preliminaries completed, the 'holy' synod was at last opened under the presidency of Paul of Heraclea, and Chrysostom was summoned to appear.

In reply to this summons, three bishops and two presbyters were commissioned to attend on his behalf, and to state that the archbishop objected to the constitution of the court, seeing that it consisted for the most part of Egyptian bishops, who had no right to sit in judgment on the bishops of Thrace. This was an objection which Theophilus himself had formerly alleged when cited to appear in the matter of the 'Tall Brothers.' Besides this, he took exception to some of the members on special grounds. He mentioned, first of all, the Bishop of Alexandria, because he had prejudged the case, declaring, as he was setting out for Constantinople, that he was going thither for the purpose of deposing the archbishop. He also named Acasius Bishop of Beræa, because he had long before threatened him with his vengeance.<sup>1</sup> He specified, finally, Severian and Antiochus, because their hostility to him, as well as the causes from which it arose, were public and notorious. But, relying on his own innocence, he expressed his willingness to appear before the synod, if these four individuals, known to be personal enemies, were removed. Moderate, however, and manifestly reasonable as this condition was, the synod refused to comply with it. The men who were thus challenged were the chief leaders and lawyers of the court, and it was feared that without their presence the whole business might break down.<sup>2</sup> We are told that the members

<sup>1</sup> When on a visit to the capital, this individual took offence at Chrysostom, because he had not treated him with, as he thought, sufficient respect, and said, 'I shall cook a dish for him some day that he will not relish.'

<sup>2</sup> It is well known to all who have any acquaintance with Church courts

of the council were so enraged at the statements and objections of the archbishop's deputies, that they not only abused, but laid their hands upon them, tore their clothes off their backs, and drove them by main force out of the meeting,—a circumstance which does not help to elevate our ideas of these 'holy synods.'

Palladius, who was with him on the occasion, and afterwards wrote a life of Chrysostom, has furnished us with a number of interesting particulars which show the spirit in which the archbishop acted at this crisis. On the morning of the day on which the trial commenced, no fewer than forty of his clerical friends gathered about him, and remained with him the whole time. Considering the part which the imperial family took in this prosecution, the presence of these friends afforded no ordinary proof of their attachment, as well as of their confidence in his character. It was fully expected that he would be brought in for treason, and condemned to suffer the penalty of death. Hence they were all anxious and depressed. Chrysostom himself was the only one among them who retained any degree of courage and composure. Seeing many of them weeping, and others running distractedly to and fro, he said: 'Sit down, my brethren. Do not weep and break my heart. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' To this one of them replied, 'We weep because we shall be left as orphans, and the Church as a widow. . . . We weep for the poor, who will now be forsaken, and for the Church, which is to be deprived of your instruction.'

Then Chrysostom, laying the fore-finger of his right

that cases of this kind are generally framed by a few individuals, some of whom are often instigated by personal feeling, and whose absence, from any unforeseen cause, would be sufficient to take all the strength and colour out of the charges, leaving the whole matter in a state of confusion, or at least with a very different complexion.

hand in the palm of his left—one of his characteristic actions—said, ‘Now don’t say anything more at present; but, as I mentioned before, hold fast by your churches. The ministry did not begin, nor will it end, with me. Moses died; but did not Joshua succeed him? Jeremiah died; and was not Baruch called to replace him? Elijah was caught up to heaven; but did not Elisha prophesy? Paul was removed; but did he not leave Timothy, Titus, and apostles, behind him?’ Another of his friends then observed, in reply to one of the remarks which had just fallen from him, ‘If we abide by our churches, we must maintain our communion with those who have passed this unrighteous sentence, and even subscribe the sentence itself.’ To this he replied: ‘Maintain your communion with them, that you may not cause division in the Church; but do not subscribe the sentence, for I have been guilty of no offence to merit deposition.’

Having been cited three times to appear at the bar of the synod, a notary of the government was then sent to summon him in the name of the Emperor. But he still refused to compear, on the grounds he had already assigned; whereupon the council, without entering into any investigation of the charges, proceeded to deliver the following sentence:—

‘As John, accused of certain crimes, and conscious of his guilt, refuses to appear, he is now deposed, according to the laws of the Church. But, since the accusation contains a charge of high treason, the pious Emperor will take order that he be removed from the Church, with force if necessary, and that he may be punished for this crime, which does not fall under our cognizance.’

Copies of this deliverance were forwarded to the Emperor for his ratification, and to the clergy of the diocese. But, besides deposing Chrysostom himself, they also deposed Heraclides, whom he had ordained to the see of Ephesus; while they restored, at the same

time, three of the bishops of Asia whom he had deprived of their office on his journey back from that city.<sup>1</sup>

The tidings of Chrysostom's deposition threw the capital into a state of intense excitement. Sozomen tells us that 'the people were made acquainted with the decree of the council towards the evening, and they immediately rose up in sedition.' At the break of day they ran to the church, and hearing that the Emperor was going to banish the bishop, they continued for the space of three days to occupy the ground between it and the episcopal residence, resolved to withstand the authorities at the risk of their lives. Theophilus, collecting the Egyptian sailors at the port, tried to force his way into the cathedral, whereupon a tumult arose, in which blood was drawn and some lives sacrificed. The troops were ordered out; and Chrysostom, dreading the consequences of a struggle between them and the people, who had already refused to give way to them, and indeed fought against them, went and placed himself privately in the hands of those who had orders to apprehend him, and was immediately conducted to the town of Prænetus in Bithynia, where he was enjoined to wait until further orders.

<sup>1</sup> Photius, *Bibliotheca*. pp. 53-60.

## XXI.

### SUNSET.

*'All is of God! If He but touch His hand,  
The mists collect, the rains fall thick and loud;  
Still, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
For! He looks back from the departing cloud.'*

LONGFELLOW.

THERE is perhaps no time at which the sun seems more glorious than when he is about to set. His rising indeed is grand, when, in the expressive words of a modern singer, he

*'In the white wake of the morning star,  
Comes furrowing all the Orient into gold.'*

But grander still is the aspect he presents, when, ascending to his meridian height, he shines forth in his strength, wrapping sea and land in one wide sheet of blinding radiance. And though his power begins to wane as he turns the slope of heaven, yet what he loses in brilliancy he more than gains in breadth and softness, while there is something at once great and tender in the rich, quiet, mellow light which falls from him, and fills

*'Our eyes with pleasant tears as we behold  
Him sink, and feel our hearts float softly with him  
Along that western paradise of clouds.'*

But his setting is indescribable. We feel that the very reflection of his vanished splendour affects the imagination more than the brightness of his glory. The long streaks of golden light which he throws back as he dips below the horizon—the crimson bars and royal edgings of azure and of orange with which he gilds the evening



clouds—are calculated to give us a more impressive idea of his real majesty than when we saw him riding in the zenith, or ‘flaming in the forehead of the morning sky.’

Something akin to this was the effect of Chrysostom's disappearance on the public feeling of the capital. When the crowds which filled the square and porches of the cathedral heard that he was gone, it seemed as if the Schekinah had departed from the sanctuary, and as if Ichabod had been written on the gates of the temple which they had come together to defend. Breaking up in silent groups, they scattered away to their homes, with a burden of fear and sorrow at their hearts. For, searching and severe as Chrysostom's preaching was, the people had confidence in him. Hence, in spite of the hard speeches that were often levelled at them, and the sharp reproofs to which they were sometimes exposed, they still continued to regard him as one who had their best interests at heart. They gave him credit for sincerity in all he said, and believed, in a blind sort of way, that it was from his earnest concern for their souls he dealt so unsparingly with their sins. Of this at least they were fully satisfied, that if he was severe, he was strictly impartial, since he dealt with their betters quite as freely and unceremoniously as he did with them.

Considering the social influence the upper classes possessed at that period, the feudal homage that was paid to them, the troops of retainers by whom they were attended both in private and in public, and the almost uncontrolled authority with which they were clothed, we may imagine the astonishment of the multitude as they listened to the words in which these haughty patricians were addressed from the pulpit of St. Sophia. There, if nowhere else, they heard the truth about themselves, and found their character set forth in its native colours. Instead of ‘the good words and fair speeches’ to which

they were accustomed from Antiochus, Severianus, and other consecrated parasites of the same class, they felt that the man who stood up there before them was no respecter of persons; that their fine airs, and liveried slaves, and pompous equipages, had no effect upon him; that he looked at them simply as *men* to whom he was called to deliver the messages of God, and for whose spiritual guidance he was officially responsible. From his frequent references to it, it is clear that he never lost sight of the solemn charge which was given to that prophet to whom in many points he himself bore so striking a resemblance: 'Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at *my mouth*, and give them warning *from me*. When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to *save his life*; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but *his blood will I require at thine hand*. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but *thou hast delivered thy soul*.' And lest this charge should be thought obsolete, or at least more applicable to the spirit of the Old than to that of the New covenant, we have only to remember that the apostle whom the Primate of Constantinople took as his great model, so far from believing anything of the kind, adopted the words of Ezekiel as his own. Thus, when delivering his farewell address to the presbyters of Ephesus, Paul made use of these most touching and impressive terms: 'And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that *I am pure from the blood of all men*. For I have *not shunned* to declare unto you *all the counsel of God*.'

Such were the precedents by which Chrysostom was

guided in the execution of his office as a public teacher; and it is just because these precedents are neglected, and because so many of the ministers of the gospel think more of themselves and of their hearers than they do of their Master, and of the commission with which He has sent them forth, that their influence is declining so sadly, and the cause of truth sinking under so disastrous an eclipse. It is to the dishonesty, the sycophancy, the paltry cowardice, the self-seeking desire to gain the favour or to escape the censure of men, that the cause of God is sacrificed, and sacrificed by those who are set up to defend it. Some of them preach science falsely so called; some a revived paganism, under the name of philosophy; some confine themselves to a mean, peddling, parochial morality; some amuse their hearers with sentimental descriptions and clap-trap illustrations, by way of renovating old clothes; and not a few 'lap them in Elysium' with spiritual rhapsodies, as airy and as empty as 'the baseless fabric of a vision;'—anything and everything, in short, but the plain truth, the 'counsel of God,' the 'gospel of salvation.' Woe unto them who are thus handling the word of God deceitfully, who are treacherously obeying the cry of a profligate and unbelieving age: 'Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits;' thereby imitating the Indian bat, which fans its victims asleep with its wings, while the foul creature is engaged in sucking their blood, and draining off the essence of their lives.

It is, however, impossible to do good in this world without calling up the spirit of evil. When the commandment comes, sin revives. So completely are the slaves of Satan beside themselves, that they are apt to turn most fiercely on their only true friends—that is, on those who are most anxious to save them, and who are willing to incur their displeasure, if they can only keep them from rushing over the precipice, and falling

headlong into the lake of fire that lies at its foot. Hence the best men have always been the greatest martyrs. Their love has been met with hatred, their labours with persecutions and reproaches, thus rendering their most valuable services to others bitter sacrifices to themselves. And so it was in the case before us. Chrysostom was too much for the vicious formalists of Constantinople, and they therefore resolved that, being down, he should not be allowed to rise again.

Mistaking the brooding silence of the people, after they heard of his departure from the city, for hopeless submission, his enemies came forward to celebrate the victory they had obtained over him, and to justify the proceedings they had taken against him. With this view, Severian appeared in the pulpit on the following day, and there, in the presence of a crowded audience, he endeavoured to explain the causes which had led to the summoning of the council, the nature of the accusations brought against Chrysostom, the refusal of the latter to appear in his own defence, together with the sentence which the assembled bishops had pronounced upon him. The fact of his declining to answer the charges laid on the table of the synod was held to be a tacit admission of their truth. 'But even supposing it were not so,' says the vicious and vindictive man who was put up to revile him on the occasion, 'supposing that none of the charges had been proved against him, the haughty spirit he has shown in refusing to obey either the citations of the synod or the summons of the Emperor—thus setting the rulers both of the Church and the State at defiance—is of itself sufficient to condemn him, since all sins are forgiven of God except pride.' Such appears to have been the substance of Severian's address; but his statements, so far from satisfying the minds of the people, had rather the effect of rousing their indignation to a greater height than

ever. Leaving the church in a body, they rushed in tumultuous crowds through the streets, denouncing both the injustice of the synod and the secret interference of the court, and demanding with loud cries the immediate recall of the bishop. Many who had previously sided with his enemies, and some even of those who had voted for his deposition, now declared openly that they had been deceived by Theophilus and his friends.

This notorious ecclesiastic became an object of intense antipathy to all parties. They knew something of the factious and unscrupulous character of the man, as well as of the vindictive spirit by which he was animated; and such was the feeling of hatred and contempt with which he was regarded, that he had to fly for his life. Palladius, who was present in the city during these commotions, tells us that if the people of Constantinople had got hold of him, they would have tied a stone round his neck and flung him into the Bosphorus. Socrates, the Church historian, states that fierce conflicts took place along the quays between the populace and the Alexandrian sailors, in which many lives were lost.

Next to the Egyptian conspirator and his band of episcopal retainers, the party of monks who had sided with them were singled out as objects of public vengeance. Several of these were chased through the streets, and slaughtered in one of the churches to which they ran for shelter. 'The torrent of sedition,' says Gibbon, 'rolled forward to the gates of the palace; and the Empress, agitated by fear or remorse, threw herself at the feet of Arcadius, and confessed that the public safety could be purchased only by the restoration of Chrysostom.' Considering that she herself was the prime mover in the whole case, we may be sure that she would hold out against any proposal of that kind as long as she could. But when, in the midst of these popular disturbances, an earthquake took place, shaking the city

to its foundations, she was seized with a fit of superstitious terror, and succumbed at once. It seemed as if heaven and earth had risen up in judgment against her for acting towards the bishop as she had done.<sup>1</sup> 'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all;' and the feeling which Eudoxia manifested in this case was at once a confession of her own guilt, and a proof of the innocence of him whom she had succeeded in driving from her capital. The earthquake just alluded to occurred on the second night after Chrysostom's departure. Early on the following day messengers were sent to Bithynia, with orders to bring Chrysostom back to Constantinople. One of these carried an autograph letter from the Empress, in which she said: 'Let not your reverence suppose that I had any knowledge of what has been done. I am innocent of your blood. It is all a plot, devised by wicked and corrupt men. God, in whose presence I weep, is witness of my tears. I cannot forget that by your hands my children were baptized.'

Without offering any comment on this specimen of royal veracity, suffice it to say that, in the course of a day or two thereafter, a ship, for which many eyes were on the outlook, was seen coming down the Straits, and making for the harbour. Besides the festive signals which fluttered from her masts and rigging, the shouts of the people who lined the opposite shore proclaimed what she was. The sea was covered with vessels great and small, which were laden with passengers, and streaming with flags, all waiting the arrival of the galley which was bearing the shepherd back to his flock, the man of the golden mouth to his throne of might—the ambon of the Basilica.<sup>2</sup> There, shading their eyes from

<sup>1</sup> The matter came home more directly to the Empress, from the fact that the bed on which she lay was raised up and flung across the room.

<sup>2</sup> He preached at first from the apsis or porch, but the people pressed upon him so closely that he was obliged to remove to the steps of the choir at the

the rays of the evening sun—then shedding its golden light on the hills of Thrace, the graceful villas of Chalcedon, and the glittering spires of Constantinople—they descried the ship which carried Chrysostom hastening down under full sail to the basin of the Golden Horn. As she passed through the gay fleet that crowded the bosom of the Bosphorus, a great shout rose up to the sky, and ran echoing along the shores of the two continents of Europe and Asia,—a shout of welcome, choked by the sobs and tears of thousands, to the thin, worn, grey-headed man, who stood with streaming eyes and uplifted hands on the deck of the galley. Brave as that man was, the storm of agitation which had passed over him during the previous weeks had aged him very considerably ; and the traces of these trials touched with not common emotion the hearts of those who had an opportunity of observing them more closely, and who saw in them the stigmata of the cross—‘the marks of the Lord Jesus.’

These, however, were visible only to the friends who stood immediately beside him, for the night had descended before the galley reached the harbour and drew up alongside of the wharf. The cries which followed her down to that point were taken up by those who waited for her at the port, and repeated by the fresh crowds that were hurrying down the various avenues of the city to the place of landing, till all the streets of the capital rang again with the joyous acclamations of the multitude.

Forming themselves into a torch-light procession, they accompanied the primate’s carriage from the shore up towards the palace, with the view of conducting him at once to the scene both of his sorrows and his

upper end of the nave. There, on a sort of raised platform, the reader’s desk or lectern stood, and it was from that place that Chrysostom was accustomed to deliver his public addresses.

triumphs—the Church of St. Sophia. They had resolved not to stop until they saw him seated in his episcopal chair, and heard his voice once more sounding from the ambon.<sup>1</sup> But he, aware of their design, and fearing to commit himself too hastily in a matter which required deliberation, declined to enter the cathedral, or to take possession of his ecclesiastical residence, until his right to do so was declared by a more numerous and more regular council than that which had deposed him. Turning aside, therefore, from the way by which they were proceeding, he struck into one of the roads leading out of the city, and retired to a country-house at some distance from it, where he found the quiet rest which he so much needed after the strange tumults that attended his departure, and now signalized his return.

But the peace which he enjoyed in his suburban retreat was not of long continuance. The people became impatient to see and hear him again ; and the Empress, dreading another disturbance, seconded their wishes, and besought the bishop to comply with the general feeling of the city by appearing in the cathedral. The Emperor also urged this upon him ; but feeling that the case was peculiar, Chrysostom was unwilling to take upon himself the responsibility of doing that which belonged properly to the courts of the Church. A council had deprived him of his office; and a council must replace him in it. He had been accused and condemned by a body of conspirators, he must be acquitted and restored by a lawful assembly of his peers. The position which he thus took up was evidently reasonable ; and although Arcadius and Eudoxia were too well aware of the means which had been used against him to attach any great importance to the judgment of the synod, yet they had both sanctioned the proceedings of that court, and had even employed the power of the State to give effect to

<sup>1</sup> The name given to the tribune or desk behind which he stood.



its finding. Chrysostom was therefore right in refusing to resume the duties of his bishopric till he was legally reponed. The Emperor agreed to summon a council for that purpose with as little delay as possible, seeing that the primate was resolved not to take any part in the business of the diocese until his character was vindicated, and the sentence pronounced against him rescinded.

But Chrysostom's friends in the city were not satisfied. So far from sympathizing with his scruples, they held that the Council of the Oak, and the men who composed it, were utterly beneath his notice, and that their judgment ought not to be recognised by him in any shape. Acting on this view of the matter, they went out in a body to the bishop's residence, and by a kind of gentle violence conducted him into the city and the sanctuary, and placed him there on his own episcopal seat.

Coming forward to his usual stand, he thus addressed them: 'What shall I say? Blessed be God! The word I spoke to you when I left, I now repeat on my return; for it has not been for a moment absent from my lips. You remember, perhaps, that I said, in the language of Job, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" When driven away, I praised Him; when brought back, I praise Him. Winter and summer are different, but they serve the same end—the increase of the field. Blessed be God, who commanded me to depart hence, and who has again restored me to you! Blessed be God, who raiseth the stormy wind, and who turneth the tempest into a calm!

'Let us learn to praise God in all circumstances. If good has come to us, let us praise Him, and it will continue with us. If evil arises, praise Him, and it will pass by. Job gave thanks to God, both when he was rich and when he became poor. The times were different,

but the feeling was the same. The calm does not relax, nor does the storm depress, the mind of the pilot. God be praised, who separated me from you, and who has led me back into the midst of you. The Father's hand is manifest alike in the one and in the other.'

Having been led in the way just mentioned to enter on the duties of his charge, he appeared regularly in the pulpit; for preaching was his *forte*, and therefore his favourite employment. Meanwhile the council for which he had asked was appointed to be held as soon as the attendance of a sufficient number of bishops could be secured.

Soothed by the hope of having his good name established, and the slur cast on his ministry removed,—encouraged by the favour of the Empress, who bestowed upon him many tokens of her friendship, and cheered by the strong, sympathizing affection of the Christian people,—he seems to have preached at this period with unwonted fervour and success. The church became more crowded than ever; multitudes poured in from every quarter to hear him; and evidences of something like a spiritual awakening began to appear. Being himself 'a spiritual man,' he was greatly moved and deeply solemnized by these hopeful signs; and the addresses he delivered were marked by a tone of tenderness which they too often lacked. As, for example, we find him speaking to those who were bowed down under a sense of guilt in such a strain as this: 'Tell me not that you are lost—that there is no hope for you—that you have sinned beyond remedy. There is a Physician, whose skill is greater than your disease, and who is able to subdue it—ay, one who has power to cure you with a single look—a Physician who can and will set right all that is wrong with you. He called you into being when as yet you were not; and if He did that much for you, can He not do more? He who made can mend you.

You cannot tell how your soul is kept in life, neither can you tell how it is purged from the defilement of sin. . . . Do not anxiously inquire how this can be; do not seek to pry into the means by which it is accomplished; but believe in the miracle.'

Let us give another extract, with the view of showing the state of the people at this time, as well as the manner in which this afflicted and persecuted teacher dealt with them: 'Ah, you will say, my guilt is great; I have sinned more frequently and more heavily than any one in the world. The sacrifice [of Christ] is great enough to cover your guilt. First acknowledge your trespass to the Lord, that He may clear you from it; confess that your sin is very great, and that will be the beginning of your salvation. The woman who came to Christ, came in that way. She shed tears of true sorrow, and she went to Him who is the source of pardoning mercy. Observe how the woman of Canaan acted. "Have mercy on me," she cried; "I have no claim of merit; I have no hope from anything in myself; I take refuge in Thy mercy. I come to Thee, in whom there is no condemnation, and who givest salvation without stint or limit to those who seek it." This woman does not go to James; she does not pray to John or to Peter; she passes through the whole of them without halting.<sup>1</sup> "I do not need any mediator," she says; "I go with a broken and a contrite heart to Him who is the fountain of grace." If He came down from heaven, and took our human nature upon Him, it is that *we may speak directly to Himself*. The cherubims above tremble at His presence; but here below the sinner may freely approach Him, and say, "Have mercy upon me." A single word uttered from a contrite heart will let in upon it an immeasurable tide of life and peace.'

<sup>1</sup> How different this teaching from that which now prevails both in the Eastern and Western Churches!

Many, we feel sure, will be surprised at the whole tone of these statements, especially when they contrast them with the kind of doctrine current among certain parties at the present day, and specially among those who are for ever talking of the 'Church Primitive and Catholic.' Here is one of the most illustrious teachers of that Church. Let them take the orator of the golden mouth, the great Bishop of Byzantium, for their model. Let them try to preach as he did. Instead of leading men to trust in traditional cant and ecclesiastical rubbish, let them seek to *awaken souls*, and to *direct them*, not to Peter, or James, or John, though they constituted the very pillars of 'the Church,' but to Him who alone is able to help; and then may they hope to save themselves and those who hear them.

## XXII.

### 'EVENING WOLVES.'

'He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain  
That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,  
Can wind around him, but he casts it off  
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.'

COWPER.

'Her princes are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.'

ZEPH. III. 3.

FROM the success which attended Chrysostom's ministry after his recall to Constantinople—success of the most vital and spiritual kind—we may easily suppose that it was a time of refreshing to himself as well as to his attached flock. The bruised reed was recovering its elasticity, and waving its head in the wind; the smoking flax was again breaking out into a bright, glowing, and far-shining flame. The people of Constantinople, as they listened to the 'old man eloquent' day after day, and felt that he was speaking 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,' became more and more exasperated against those treacherous men who had combined together for the purpose of destroying his character, and driving him from the episcopal chair of the metropolis. When Theophilus and his band of followers found that he whom they had deposed was summoned back by the public voice; when they heard of the letter which the Empress had written to him, and

witnessed the enthusiastic reception which was given him by all classes, they saw that it was time for them to take their departure ; and they did so, as we have already noticed.

The malignants of the city, deprived of their leaders, broke asunder, and dispersed in all directions. Such of them as remained at home thought it advisable to keep very quiet, and to show themselves as little as possible in public. The sudden disappearance of this party was remarked ; and Chrysostom in one of his sermons alludes to it as an example of God's care for His people and cause. 'The Church,' he says, 'is continually assailed, but it is also continually preserved. The more it is persecuted, the more it prospers. Where are they who sought to destroy it? I go into the streets, but I see none of them. Who, then, pursues them? No one ; but their enemy is within. Conscience tells them of what they have done, and fills their hearts with fear.'

Thus did the faithful man labour in peace for the space of some weeks after his return, waiting meanwhile for the meeting of the council which the Emperor had promised to call. Owing, however, to the party cabals which were still kept up by disaffected ecclesiastics on the one hand, and by various groups of monks, courtiers, and politicians on the other, the council was delayed from week to week, much to Chrysostom's disappointment. But one of those tropical squalls, of which he had such frequent experience in the course of his life, came on at this crisis, and had the effect of bringing the storm-birds who haunted the synods quickly enough on the scene.

The Empress, naturally vain and ambitious, as we have seen, had ordered a silver statue of herself to be erected in the principal square of the city. The spot selected stood in front of the senate-house, and before the principal entrance to the Church of St. Sophia. Its

inauguration was attended with games, dances, and other festivities of a very noisy and unseemly character. These disorderly proceedings were so entirely out of keeping with the services going on in the church as to be a sort of public scandal ; but the bishop's mind was wounded most of all by the pagan ceremonies that were introduced. Following the precedents observed in similar cases under the heathen Emperors, the populace were encouraged to pay idolatrous homage to the image of Eudoxia, thus betraying by a public act the honour and the interests of the Christian faith. Chrysostom could not but feel that the matter was one of very grave importance ; and therefore, notwithstanding the unsettled position in which he was placed, he saw that he was bound at all hazards to protest against these doings, considering especially that they were carried on before the eyes of the people as they were passing to the church. Indeed, the services there were not a little disturbed by the drunken shouts and pagan mummeries with which the ceremony of consecration was accompanied.

‘Nothing,’ says D'Aubigne, ‘could be more repugnant to the serious mind of Chrysostom than such disorders. He was deeply grieved. The idea that the habits of the heathen were again to be brought into vigour in the immediate neighbourhood of the Church of the true God, that the tumult of the riotous multitude should interfere with the faithful worshippers, roused the indignation of the bishop. We are even told by a contemporary writer, that the prefect of the town, who was a Manichean, had purposely disturbed the worship in the Christian church by these orgies ; that Chrysostom had complained of it ; that the prefect, in revenge, had maligned him to the Empress ; and that the day following this remonstrance, the noise and the scandal, far from diminishing, had only increased.’ Thus pressed by

considerations of duty which he could not set aside, Chrysostom brought the subject before the congregation, expressed his regret at the demoralizing exhibitions thus sanctioned by the public authorities, and condemned them as inconsistent alike with the word of God and the law of the land.

The parties implicated in these transactions were, of course, indignant at the manner in which their proceedings were stigmatized, and the Empress looked upon the act as a personal and public insult. The consequence was, that the capital was again torn asunder by internal dissensions, which became more bitter and more general than they ever were before.

In this electric state of the social atmosphere, Chrysostom appeared in the pulpit. It happened to be the festival of John the Baptist—that is, the anniversary of his martyrdom. Choosing a passage connected with the occasion, he was said to have used the following words in the exordium of his discourse: ‘Again Herodias rages, again she dances, again she demands the head of John.’ Such words, natural enough in any other circumstances, were immediately understood as being aimed at the Empress. That there may have been some covert allusion to her is possible, and not perhaps unlikely; but yet the sentence might have appeared in any discourse on the death of the Baptist without attracting particular notice. Preaching on such a topic at such a time, it may be doubted whether Chrysostom could have spoken of Herodias and her treatment of John without leading those who heard him to suppose that there was something in what he said.<sup>1</sup> Be that as it may, the words we have quoted were caught up by his enemies, and reported

<sup>1</sup> Expressions *similar* to those quoted occur in one of his homilies on John the Baptist. It is not improbable that more point was given to them by those who picked them out. But Socrates and Sozomen both allege that such expressions were actually employed.



to the Empress, who was so enraged, that she went immediately to her weak-minded husband, and prevailed upon him to pass an edict suspending the bishop from the exercise of his functions until the case should be inquired into at the approaching council.

The members summoned to that council were not long in coming together *now*. Those who hung back when the object was to clear Chrysostom from the sentence pronounced against him by Theophilus and his riding commission, got over their difficulties very speedily. The famous Alexandrian leader himself was of course expected to be present, but he made some excuse for not appearing. It was plain that the victim whom he had so long pursued was fairly run to earth at last, and that his services were not required. But he wrote a letter to his friends, pointing out the course which they ought to follow, and on that letter they resolved to act. The course which Theophilus recommended simplified their proceedings amazingly, while it had the effect of shutting out the Archbishop of Constantinople from offering any explanations, meeting any objections, or saying a single word in his own defence. In short, it left him under the cloud of obloquy which he and his party had already contrived to throw over him.

Theophilus, being an expert Church lawyer, could lay his finger in a moment on any act or edict that was likely to serve his purpose. Among the canons of the Council of Antioch, held A.D. 351, he found one (canon xii.) which declared that a deposed bishop could only be restored by a more numerous council than that which condemned him; but that if, instead of waiting for such a council, he appealed to the civil power, he should *ipso facto* be cut off from all further connection with the Church. This act, though based on a principle sound enough in itself, did not apply to Chrysostom's case, inasmuch as he had made no appeal for restoration to the

civil power, but was, on the contrary, constrained against his will to resume his functions, both by the Emperor and the people, before the council for which he had asked had time to meet. Close, however, as this canon came to the object in view, it was not to be found among the laws of the Church. The council which had passed it was composed of Arians, and it was therefore not included in those collections of Church acts which were in common use. But Theophilus, skilled in such matters, knew where to find it, and saw, moreover, that it was the very thing that was wanted in this case.<sup>1</sup> When the canon thus discovered came to be discussed, the question was what amount of validity it possessed, and whether the acts of a body which had been excommunicated by the Council of Nice could be held as binding on the orthodox Church. It was quite plain that they could not. But, besides this flaw, it was further urged on Chrysostom's behalf, that he had not been deposed by a council properly called, and had therefore declined to appear before them, or to recognise their finding as of any legal force. In demanding another council, his design was to clear himself from the aspersions cast upon him by those personal enemies who had accused, or rather abused, him at the Synod of the Oak. It was not his office as Primate of Constantinople, but his character as a Christian bishop, that he sought to defend before such a council as he had solicited the Emperor to convene.

After a good deal of wrangling about the Synod of Antioch and the value of its decisions, it was at last proposed that the point should be discussed by ten members in presence of the Emperor, these members to be selected by Arcadius himself from both sides. Knowing how he felt towards Chrysostom at this time,

<sup>1</sup> It was found in the archives of Alexandria, and related to the proceedings of the Arian party in the case of Athanasius.

and relying also on the private influence of Eudoxia, the parties who made this proposal calculated with confidence on the result.

The conference accordingly met in one of the apartments of the palace ; and as soon as it was constituted, the Emperor called upon Elpidius Bishop of Laodicea to open the discussion. He was an aged and venerable man, renowned alike for his piety and wisdom, and was therefore naturally entitled to the precedence which Arcadius had given him. Speaking in defence of Chrysostom, he showed that the Synod of the Oak was not properly called or legally composed, and that its sentences were therefore null and void : from which it followed that John of Constantinople was still the lawful bishop of the diocese. Going on to deal with the canon on which Chrysostom's opponents rested their course of procedure, he argued that it was not binding on, because it had never been acknowledged by, the true orthodox Church. At this point he was contradicted by Antiochus, Acasius, and others ; and one of those violent disputes so common at council meetings took place, the members finding it impossible to restrain their customary ebullitions of rudeness and wrath even in the presence of the Emperor. Elpidius, ashamed of their conduct, turned to the Emperor, and said, 'We are trespassing on your patience, sire. Here is a proposition which may perhaps settle the question before us. Let Antiochus, Acasius, and their friends sign the creed of the Synod of Antioch, of which they think so much, and I will give in, and confess myself beaten.' The Emperor, but little versed in legal investigations, and still less in theological, looked grave, and threw his friends into utter confusion by saying, 'This proposition seems to me very fair ; are you willing to accede to it ?' The idea of being committed to the views of that council which had condemned the great upholder of the orthodox faith (Athanasius) was

rather an awkward business. But Antiochus and his friends, acting for the great man at Alexandria as well as for themselves, were not disposed to stick at trifles, and therefore promised to do what the Emperor required of them *some other day*; and so the matter was postponed *sine die*.

But although nothing decisive was done either by the conference or the council, the point aimed at by Chrysostom’s enemies was gained by other means. On Hallow-eve, the bishop and those clerical brethren who adhered to him were assembled together, as was the custom in those days, for the purpose of spending the night in religious exercises, and bringing in the morning of Easter day—the great festival of the Oriental Church. Along with them were met three thousand catechumens, mostly young people of both sexes, who were to be received into the Church by baptism, and were preparing for the administration of that sacred rite.<sup>1</sup> Before this season had arrived the disaffected bishops had used all their influence to dissuade the Emperor from appearing at church on that occasion, or at least from allowing Chrysostom to officiate. Arcadius, urged by the Empress as well as by them, sent an intimation to the primate that he was to vacate his office and leave the church. But Chrysostom replied that he was not at liberty to

<sup>1</sup> That season was specially selected for the observance of this rite, and the *night* seems to have been chosen for that purpose, as shadowing forth more significantly the nature of the change through which the catechumens were supposed to pass. As our Lord lay in the grave the night before His resurrection, so were they emblematically ‘buried with Him in baptism, and rose with Him’ (next morning) ‘to newness of life.’ In the Western Church also this period was set apart for the same purpose. Hence it happened that many thousands were sometimes baptized at the same time. On Easter morning the whole of these appeared in white robes, as a symbol of the life on which they had entered. These robes were worn till the following Sabbath, when they were laid aside at the close of the service. Hence that day was called White-Sunday, or, in the nomenclature of the Western Church, *Dominica in albis*.

do so, that God had appointed him to his charge, and that He must set him free before he could resign it. 'The city is the Emperor's,' he said ; 'let him, if he will, use force to send me away, and then I can go without wounding my conscience.' The Emperor, however, was unwilling, both for private and political reasons, to adopt this course. But other parties about the palace were not so scrupulous. Hence, while the clergy and the catechumens were engaged in singing and prayer, a body of troops surrounded the church about nine o'clock at night, forced their way not merely into the nave, but up to the altar, on which were placed the consecrated elements. 'Many were trodden under foot ; many wounded by the swords of the soldiers ; the clergy were dragged to prison ; some females who were about to be baptized were obliged to fly with their disordered apparel ; the waters of the font were stained with blood ; the soldiers seized the communion vessels as their plunder ; the sacred elements were scattered about ; their garments were bedewed with the blood of the Redeemer. Constantinople for several days had the appearance of a city which had been stormed. Wherever the partisans of Chrysostom were assembled, they were assaulted and dispersed by the soldiery ; and one frantic attempt was made to assassinate the prelate.'<sup>1</sup>

Such are the details which Chrysostom himself has furnished in his letter to Innocent of Rome, and they are fully confirmed by the annalists of the period. It is further added, that those who were driven away from the church were ridden down in the streets by the Thracian cavalry (chiefly Goths and pagans), who stripped the half-naked catechumens of such articles of clothing as they had suddenly thrown around them in their flight, snatching their necklaces and earrings from the persons of the women, and not hesitating to tear off

<sup>1</sup> Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 235.

the lobes of their ears in order to secure possession of the latter. A great multitude of both sexes were seized and imprisoned, while others fled to one of the neighbouring baths, where they sought to comfort each other by mutual exhortations and devotional exercises. Hence it was remarked that the jails were turned into churches, and the churches into jails, or 'dens of thieves.'

Expelled from the cathedral in the manner just related, Chrysostom retired to his own apartments at the palace, accompanied by some of his clerical friends, whither they were also followed by the bulk of the people, who constituted themselves into a sort of body-guard to watch over the safety of the bishop. They knew that his life was in danger, not so much from the soldiers, who were held in check by the indecision of the Emperor, but from other parties. It was discovered that hired assassins were lying in wait for him. One of them had made his way into a room adjoining that which Chrysostom occupied. Being caught and questioned as to his business there, he drew out a knife, with which he attacked those who attempted to arrest him, and seven men were stabbed in the scuffle, who afterwards died of their wounds. When brought before the judge, the criminal confessed that he was servant to a priest who had paid him fifty gold pieces for undertaking to do away with the bishop. The money was found upon him, along with three daggers, which he had concealed under his clothes.

The people demanded the immediate execution of the murderer, but it does not appear that any steps were taken for the apprehension of the atrocious miscreant by whom he was tempted to commit the crime. The words quoted from the Jewish prophet at the beginning of this chapter were but too closely fulfilled in the case both of the ecclesiastical and imperial authorities. The 'judges were evening wolves,' the prophets 'light and

treacherous persons,' and the priests did not hesitate in this case to 'pollute the sanctuary' even with the blood of their brethren, or scruple for a moment to 'do violence to the law' whether of Church or of State. Hence the convicted assassin was allowed to escape, and all the other evil-doers who were in league against the primate and his followers were secretly favoured and protected.

The troops that attacked the Basilica had been ordered out without the Emperor's knowledge or consent; but those who had made themselves responsible for that act, dreading the consequences, endeavoured to restrain the excesses of the soldiery, and to drive the people back to the church again, as it was felt to be a very awful thing to allow Easter to pass without public religious services of any kind. After the scenes through which the congregation had passed, it may be supposed that they were not inclined to return to a place desecrated by sacrilege and bloodshed, and that, too, without the presence of their beloved and revered pastor. Instead, therefore, of going thither, they remained outside, watching the residence of the archbishop, resolved on this, as on a former occasion of the same kind, to protect his life at the risk of their own.

Matters stood thus for more than a week, the Emperor's mind vacillating from day to day in a flutter of confusion and doubt. Though pitifully weak, he was by no means so hardened in wickedness as those malignant plotters, lay and clerical, by whom he was surrounded. In spite of all the calumnies heaped upon the archbishop, he felt towards him something as Herod did towards the Baptist; he '*feared* John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy.' In his case, as in that of the Jewish prince, it was rather the fear of superstition than the effect of any higher sentiment, and therefore not strong enough to stand out against the influence of *his* 'raging

Herodias,' and her privy council of ecclesiastical intriguers. The latter were very busy during this season of public agitation and suspense. Severian, Antiochus, and the rest of the synodical clique, did their best to remove the Emperor's scruples. They urged upon him the necessity of putting an end to the state of strife and disorder in which the city and diocese were involved, by giving effect to the sentence of the synod, and banishing the bishop for the act of treason of which he was guilty in publicly reviling his own imperial consort. Finding that all their arguments were not sufficient to satisfy his mind, they proposed at last to take the whole responsibility of the matter upon themselves, and to free him from any blame, moral or judicial, that might be connected with the deposition and expulsion of the primate; and he, believing in the dispensing power of the priesthood, at length consented to do what they required.

Accordingly, Arcadius on the following day despatched his private secretary to Chrysostom, with orders to quit the episcopal residence, and to leave the city forthwith. This officer was accompanied by a body of soldiers, who were instructed to apprehend the bishop, and to remove him by force should any attempt at rescue be made. Feeling that he was not at liberty to 'resist the power,' and that he was now set free from any obligation to remain at his post, he went at once to the church, where he engaged in prayer with those faithful brethren who had 'continued with him in all his temptations'—and it is pleasing to find that there were many such. He then visited the baptistery, and took leave of the deaconesses and the widows who were assembled there, and who had supported him faithfully for many years, not only by their prayers and sympathies, but also with their pecuniary means and active personal services. After urging them to persevere in their labours of love, he said, 'If any one is appointed in



my place who is properly chosen, and who obtains the office without canvassing or caballing of any kind, submit yourselves to him, as you would to me, for the Church cannot remain without a bishop.'

How trying this parting must have been, both to him and to these devoted friends, may be easily imagined. But the scene, if painful, was not prolonged ; for, hearing the march of the soldiers as they approached the cathedral, and anxious to prevent any further conflict between them and the people, he slipped out privately by a side door, and placed himself in the hands of the guard. By them he was escorted down to the harbour, and put on board a ship there ready to receive him, and which at once started across the sea to Bithynia, on the ninth day of June 404. And so the preacher of the golden mouth, the pride of Asia, and the glory of the primitive Church, passed away finally and for ever from the shores of Europe ! As he stood on the deck of the ship that dashed through the billows of the Bosphorus, carrying him every moment farther off from the towers of Constantinople, the green terraces of Chalcedon, with the memorable church and palace of 'The Oak,' he might have said, in the words of the American poet :

' Good-bye, proud world ! I'm going home ;  
Thou'rt not my friend ; I am not thine ;  
Too long through weary crowds I roam :—  
A river ark on the ocean brine,  
Too long I am tossed like the driven foam ;  
But now, proud world, I'm going home.'

## XXIII.

### FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

*' Good-bye to flattery's fawning face,  
To grandeur with his wise grimace ;  
To upstart wealth's averted eye,  
To supple office, low and high ;  
To crowded halls, to court and street,  
To frozen hearts and hasting feet ;  
To those who go, and those who come,  
Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home.'*

EMERSON.

*' Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'—REV. I. 2.*

THE part of Bithynia to which the exiled Patriarch of Constantinople was conveyed by the guard of soldiers who were sent in charge of him was Nicæa, the seat of the celebrated council. There he rested for the space of a month, awaiting the decision of the Emperor as to his final destination. It was some hours before the people had heard of his departure ; but wondering where he was, and fearing lest his enemies should lay hands upon him in the midst of the tumult, they rushed in a body to the church as soon as they discovered that he had left the episcopal residence. The troops, consisting mainly of foreign barbarians from the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, sympathized with those under whose orders they acted in hating the followers of the bishop, who composed the most earnest portion of the congregation. Hence, so far from making any allowance for the state of anxiety and alarm into which they were thrown at this juncture, these savage mercenaries scoffed at the 'Johannites,' as they were called, resisted their

entrance into the cathedral, and drove them back at the point of the sword. While this struggle was going on in the aisles and porches of the Basilica, one of those white squalls, so frequent in the tropics, broke over the city, adding to the violence of human passion the terrors of a hurricane. Nor was this all. As if to render the day of Chrysostom's disappearance yet more memorable in the annals of the city, and to fix the thoughts of all parties yet more intently on that dark and baleful event, the cathedral, still warm with the blood of the worshippers, and rocking to its foundations with the force of the tempest, became gradually filled with smoke, and the cry arose that the house was on fire. That cry was but too well founded. The soldiers and the crowd fled panic-struck towards the principal entrance, trampling upon each other in their eagerness to escape; and by the time they reached the great square, they saw the flames leaping out at the windows, and spreading to the walls of the adjoining senate-house, till the whole block of buildings was in a blaze.

It appears that the fire began at the ambon, that is, at the spot from which the bishop was accustomed to address the people, and seizing on the platform of the lectern and the pillars of the choir, soon caught hold of the body of the church. 'A violent north wind drove the flames towards the palace of the senate; the lead on the roof melted, the pillars burst, the statues were calcined, the gold and silver and other metals were turned into burning lava; the palace speedily became a heap of ruins. The two most beautiful monuments of Eastern Rome were thus destroyed.'<sup>1</sup>

Our readers may easily imagine the effect of the circumstances we have mentioned—in themselves so deeply significant—on the mind of the multitude, already but too well prepared for ominous signs and super-

<sup>1</sup> Merle D'Aubigne.

natural indications such as these strange disasters were fitted to suggest. That effect was so deep and general, that the authorities tried to turn it aside by tracing the fire at least to a natural cause, and one that was fitted to divert the public awe into a feeling of indignation against the friends of the primate. These friends, who had been so cruelly treated by Chrysostom's enemies, and who were mourning bitterly over the loss of their beloved father and faithful guide, were accused of having kindled the fire by which the church and the senate-house were consumed, and from which the royal palace had but narrowly escaped. With the view of giving additional effect to this cruel charge, it was maliciously affirmed that it was a premeditated act, and that the bishop himself, if he did not suggest it, was at least a consenting party in it. Optatus, the prefect, summoned a number of them to his bar, and sought by means of the rack to extract from them a confession of guilt. A young ecclesiastic named Eutropius, along with several others, died under the torture. Olympias and the deaconesses, who were the last to whom the bishop had spoken, were brought into court. Optatus, addressing the first of these 'honourable women' and venerable servants of the temple, said, 'Why did you set fire to the church?' To which she replied in a tone of calm dignity: 'My whole life in this city ought, I think, to protect me from such a charge. I have built many churches, and it is not likely that I should be the means of burning one.' In answer to this, the foul-mouthed and evil-minded Manichæan said, 'Oh yes! We know pretty well the sort of life you have led'—alluding to the calumnies which had been circulated by the disappointed monks. Stung to the quick as this noble Christian lady must have been by such a shameful insult, she simply replied, 'Let another judge take your place, and do you become my accuser;' meaning, of

course, that she challenged him to prove the charge to which as a magistrate he had so cruelly and unjustly referred.

The proceedings in this case lasted for two months, but led to no conclusion. If the firing of the cathedral was an intentional act, and not an accidental occurrence, as many believed it to be, the perpetrator was never discovered. This, however, was only the first of a lengthened series of persecutions to which the late primate's friends were subjected. The person appointed to the vacant see was Arsacius, who had acted as archdeacon under Chrysostom, but was one of those 'false brethren' who gave evidence against him at the Synod of the Oak. At his death, which happened in about a year and a half after his appointment, he was succeeded by Atheus, a member of the same clique. The faithful party felt that they could hold no communion with such men. Hence they withdrew from the cathedral, and formed themselves into a separate congregation outside the city; but their enemies not only pursued and scattered them, but got an edict passed, prohibiting them from holding any meetings there or elsewhere in future.

The same course of persecution was adopted towards all who adhered to Chrysostom throughout the Church at large. A number both among the clergy and laity refused to hold fellowship with the bishops of Constantinople or Alexandria, because of the part they had taken at the Council of the Oak, and in connection with the banishment of the late metropolitan. The ecclesiastics were threatened with deposition, and the laymen with the confiscation of their property. Some of the former were sent into exile, as Serapion of Heraclea—and others were kept in prison for years, as Heraclides of Ephesus—simply on account of their attachment to Chrysostom, and their avowed disapproval of the course which had been followed by the party

opposed to him. It was at this period also that Flavian of Antioch—Chrysostom's former bishop and life-long friend—died; and a successor was intruded on the diocese there by Severian and the rest of 'the riding commission' who supported the policy of Theophilus. But that individual, otherwise of immoral and objectionable character, never obtained the confidence or respect of the people.

Among the most eminent of those who had espoused the cause of the exiled patriarch, was Innocent Bishop of Rome. From his position as a neutral party, he was able to form a dispassionate judgment of the case; and felt so concerned at the injustice with which the Primate of Constantinople was treated, that he sent messengers thither with letters of remonstrance against the violent and irregular course which Theophilus and his party were pursuing. But means were taken to prevent these messengers from arriving at Constantinople in time to attend the council; and as they refused to be bribed, they were actually robbed of the letters they brought, and compelled to return home without doing anything in the matter for which they were sent.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the tactics to which the church-leaders of that day resorted; and looking at those specimens of their proceedings which have met us in the course of the present narrative, no one, we think, can wonder at the complaints of Gregory of Nazianzen and Martin of

<sup>1</sup> Arcadius, alarmed at the storms and earthquakes which shook the East at this time, sent a messenger to Nilus, a famous hermit of Mount Sinai, asking an interest in his prayers. To which Nilus answered: 'How can Constantinople be saved from earthquakes and the fire of heaven, so long as the wicked are allowed to rule with arrogance, while that pillar of the Church, that light of the truth, that herald of Christ, the Bishop John, has been sent into banishment? . . . I am astonished at seeing the audacity with which the laws are set at defiance, and all ideas of justice are overturned. You have allowed yourself to be deceived by wicked men, and have driven away the great light of the Church.'

Tours, or hesitate to admit that the leaders in question were anything but a wholesome or creditable set of men. If 'the wisdom which cometh from above is pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without hypocrisy and without partiality,' then theirs was certainly not that 'wisdom,' but something quite the opposite, wherever it came from.

'Oh, it is monstrous ! monstrous !  
Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it ;  
The winds did sing it to me ; and the thunder—  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe—pronounced  
The name.'

Before concluding this notice of Chrysostom's enemies, we may state in a sentence or two, that the records of the time abound in strange allusions to the marks of retributive vengeance with which some of the most conspicuous among them were visited.

The Empress Eudoxia died in the course of that year—sinking suddenly, and with excruciating agony, in the pangs of child-birth. The Bishop of Chalcedon, whose malignant zeal induced Theophilus and Severian to select his diocese as the best place for the meeting of the council, was laid aside by a slight accident to his foot during the sitting of the court. Inflammation set in ; mortification supervened. Both legs were amputated in the hope of saving his life, but it was all in vain ; and he also died a mutilated and miserable object before that year was out. Another member of the synod lost his reason, and imagined himself to be continually hunted by wild beasts. A third member was overtaken by disease in the tongue—that organ 'with which he pronounced the sentence.' It swelled to such a degree, that he was never able to use it again, but wrote down on a tablet a confession of his guilt. A fourth was seized with intense pain in one of his fingers—a finger of 'the hand with which he wrote the sentence'—and so forth.

While we may not be disposed to adopt the ideas of retribution on which such statements are founded, they serve at least to show how strong the popular feeling and belief of the time were as to the innocence of Chrysostom, and the wickedness of the men by whom he was condemned.

It is time, however, to return to the illustrious exile himself, and to recount as briefly as we can the leading incidents connected with his captivity and the close of his life. We have already said that his first resting-place was Nicæa. Here he remained for a month in charge of two soldiers who were appointed to guard him, and who were so much impressed by what they saw of his private character, that they became greatly attached to him, and seemed more anxious to wait upon him than to watch him. His friend Olympias was much concerned that he had no servant to attend to his wants; but he says in reply, 'They take such good care of me, that I do not need the services of an attendant.' In the same letter he writes to her in the most cheering and encouraging strain: 'I am well and happy,' he says, 'and my only anxiety is lest you should not be equally so.' While tarrying here, he was not idle. On the contrary, he kept up a busy correspondence with those who had charge of the missions which he had set on foot in various parts of the heathen world. Writing to Constantius at Antioch, who was his principal agent in Syria and Phœnicia, he says: 'I exhort you, as I have always done, however sharply the winds may blow, not to neglect your part of the work. . . . The difficulty of the times cannot excuse us if we let our hands hang down. When Paul was a prisoner at Philippi, and could do nothing more, he exercised his soul in prayer. Ask every one who has power with God,' he adds, 'to pray with all their hearts that the Church may not be wrecked in the storm which is now beating upon it.' After



cautioning him in this way against despondency and remissness, he asks him to send a particular account of the progress of the cause, the number of mission-houses yearly erected, and of preachers sent forth to the work.

Hearing of a famous recluse who lived in the neighbourhood, he paid him a visit, and succeeded in drawing him from his life of idle retirement, and sending him to Antioch, where he was set apart for missionary service in Phœnicia.<sup>1</sup> It may be stated here, that among the other signs of Chrysostom's sound-heartedness in his Master's cause, was the warm interest he took in this department of Christian effort,—a department much neglected by the churchmen of the time, and left in a great measure to the zeal of the monks. Both in Antioch and Constantinople Chrysostom frequently preached to the heathen population; and where, as in the case of the Goths, he could not address them in their native tongue, he tried to speak to them through an interpreter.

Having spent the month of June in quiet labours of this kind at Nicæa, the Emperor's order arrived assigning the remote town of Cucusus in Armenia as the place of his exile.

This town (now known by the name of Coscau) lay on the confines of Isauria and Armenia. It was a

<sup>1</sup> The bishop, on being informed that some nomadic tribes of Scythia, who pitched their tents along the banks of the Ister, thirsted for the waters of salvation, but had no one to bring the spring to them, sought out men willing to imitate the labours of the apostles, and sent them to these people. I have read some of his letters written to Leontius the Bishop of Ancyra, in which he speaks of the conversion of the Scythians, and begs him to send to them men capable of showing to them the way of salvation. Hearing that there were in our neighbourhood certain villages in which the errors of Marcion were held, he wrote to the pastor of that region, and exhorted him to eradicate the evil, and offered him the aid of the imperial power. The heartfelt solicitude with which, like the divine apostle, he watched over the welfare of the churches, is clearly evinced by the facts which have been just related.—THEODORET, *Ecl. H.* 329-30 (Bagster's ed.).

wretched place, in the midst of a wild district overrun by savage tribes, and lying almost out of the limits of the civilised world. When informed that this was to be the scene of his exile, his first impression was one of deep disappointment ; and he wrote to his friends at Constantinople, complaining that 'they had done no better for him' than to allow of his being banished to such a dreary spot. 'A condemned criminal,' he says, 'would not be sent to so distant and desolate a region ; yet I, a weak old man, must go among the wild Isaurians.'<sup>1</sup> It was a very unusual thing for him to write in this strain, or to give way to a spirit of discontent under any circumstances ; and he therefore hastens, before hearing from them, to say in another letter to Olympias : 'Trouble no one further about the place. My friends are kind, and have, no doubt, done their best. God be praised for all things ! So will I ever say, no matter what comes to pass.'

On the 4th of July he left Nicæa with his military guard, and travelled on under a burning sun, through country roads, and over rugged mountains, where no houses of entertainment or means of comfort could be found. In this way he passed through Phrygia, Galatia, and Cappadocia, arriving at Cæsarea ill with fever, and 'more dead than alive,' as he says, after a month's exposure to the excessive heat and other hardships of travel. Wherever he went he found the clergy, with but few exceptions, opposed to him. The general feeling, however, was in his favour ; and many of those with whom he met on his way, testified their respect for him in a manner that could not fail both to gratify and to touch him. Groups of men and women stood waiting for him at different points of the road, knelt down to receive his blessing as he passed, and wept as they saw him proceeding on his painful journey. Trading caravans

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Deaconess Theodora.

stopped when he appeared in sight ; and the companies of travellers and merchantmen drew up by the wayside, and saluted him with every mark of sympathy and reverence. 'I write to let you know,' he says in a letter to Olympias, 'that there are many who feel for me. It is a great consolation when one is not compelled to say, with the Psalmist, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none."' "

Unaccustomed as he was to physical exertion, owing to his retired habits, this journey tried him severely. As already noticed, he came to Cæsarea in a state of complete prostration—'thrice dead,' as he expresses it in one of his letters. But through the care of friends in that place, and the kindness of multitudes who came to see him, he soon recovered his strength and spirits, and was in a condition to resume his studies and his correspondence. Pharetrius, the bishop of the city, acted a very double part towards him, and was evidently unworthy of the chair which Basil the Great had occupied. Before Chrysostom came, he affected a great interest in him, sending forward messengers to meet him, and to say how much he longed to embrace him. When the illustrious stranger arrived, however, Bishop Pharetrius took himself out of the way, so that Chrysostom had to go without his embrace, which, to say the least, was no great loss to him.

It is more than probable that this worthy divine was frightened by the monks, who in many places were the terror of the bishops and the tyrants of the Church. Cæsarea swarmed with these lazy fanatics, whose zeal was strong in proportion to their ignorance, and the most of whom were little better than howling bigots. Looking upon the Primate of Constantinople as a condemned heretic, who held the opinions of Origen, and sided with the 'Tall Brothers' against that great and good man Theophilus of Alexandria—not to speak of

those renowned preachers the Bishops of Gabala and Ptolemais—the monks of Cæsarea gathered about the house in which he lodged, and threatened to burn it over his head if he remained another day in the city. Some of his friends tried to pacify them with the assurance that he intended to leave as soon as his health and the state of the weather would allow. Not satisfied with this answer, the pious vagabonds returned the next day, and actually drove him out of the place.

Setting out in a litter (as it was in the very midst of the hot season), he had not proceeded far on his journey when he was accosted by the servants of Seleucia, a lady of distinction, who had a country-house in that quarter, and who had instructed them to meet the persecuted man, and to give him a quiet shelter there. This becoming known in the town, Seleucia was denounced by the monk party; there was a great uproar; and she, yielding to their menaces, caused the rumour to be spread that the Isaurians were coming, and had been observed in the immediate neighbourhood. Chrysostom was roused at midnight by this false alarm, and urged to fly for his life. Mounted on a mule which was provided for him, he started off in haste through wild passes and rough hill-roads, guarded by the soldiers, and guided by a party of Seleucia's serfs. The night was close and cloudy, but they did not dare to light their torches, for fear of attracting the notice of the Isaurian raiders. The animal on which Chrysostom was placed stumbled and fell with him. He himself tells his friends at Constantinople that 'he nearly lost his life,' and had to make his way on foot, in the midst of the dark, 'led, or rather drawn forward,' by Euethius, one of his attendants, who 'took him by the arm.'

At length, after a long and weary journey, he reached Cucusus about the middle of August. It was a poor mean place, out of the way, and out of the world; but

he was glad of the rest it afforded him, and thankful for the kind reception that he met with. An old acquaintance, who resided there, had sent his servant to Cæsarea for the express purpose of placing his house at his disposal, he himself removing elsewhere, that the bishop might have free possession of the premises. Other friends at Constantinople, who owned estates in that part of Armenia, wrote to their stewards to offer him whatever accommodation he required, and to supply him with such provisions, fruit, and wine as their fields and gardens could furnish. An old lady, of the name of Sabiniana, travelled all the way from Antioch to Cucusus that she might be there to receive him, and have everything in order for him when he came. It was also a source of no small satisfaction to him to find that Adelphius, the bishop of the place, was one of those independent men who had formed a correct opinion of his case, and whose confidence in him was confirmed by all he saw of his personal character.<sup>1</sup>

Soothed by these circumstances, and by the undisturbed rest which he here enjoyed, he not only became reconciled to the spot, but so much attached to it that he dreaded lest his friends should succeed in getting him removed to some other, and, as they might think, more desirable locality. He therefore wrote to them earnestly deprecating any movement of that kind, declaring that

<sup>1</sup> This will explain that passage in Sozomen in which he tells us that 'John acquired great celebrity even in the place of his exile. He possessed ample pecuniary resources; and being, besides, liberally supplied with money by Olympias the deaconess and others, he purchased the liberty of many captives in Isauria, and restored them to their families. He also administered to the necessities of many who were in want, and by his kind words comforted those who did not stand in need of money. He was hence exceedingly beloved, not only in Armenia, where he dwelt, but by all the people of the neighbouring countries; and the inhabitants of Antioch, and of the other parts of Syria and of Cilicia, frequently sought his society.' —SOZOMEN, *Ecc. Hist.* 419 (Bagster's ed.).

he was more than contented, and wanted no change. 'There is only one thing,' he says, 'I wish for, and that is to hear from you as often as possible.' Such was the feeling with which he came to regard the place of his exile. He had not yet, however, experienced the rigours of the climate, or the disadvantages of a district surrounded by lawless tribes, like the highland reavers of Armenia. Living in sight of the snow-clad mountains of Ararat, he who had been brought up in the warm and genial atmosphere of Syria felt the winters so bitterly cold, that his health and comfort were very seriously affected. Writing to Olympias in the spring of 405, he thus describes his own condition: 'I write to you from the brink of the grave; for during the last few months I found myself no better, but on the contrary almost worse than dead, having only life enough left in me to be sensible of sufferings from every quarter. It was to me one long night. I was closely confined to bed; and in spite of all the precautions I could use, I found it impossible to defend myself from the injurious effects of the cold. Though I kept fires burning, and shut myself up in a little close chamber, half suffocated with smoke, and heaped blankets and coverings of every kind about me, never once crossing the threshold, I yet suffered very much from sickness, constant vomiting, and long sleepless nights. Since the spring has set in, and the weather has changed, my illness has abated, and I am now feeling somewhat better.'

But the summer heats he soon discovered to be more oppressive in themselves, as well as more hurtful to his health, than the severities of winter. 'My health,' he says in a subsequent letter to the same correspondent, 'is violently assailed. Nothing can be procured here; neither physicians, medicines, nor any of the most necessary comforts of life, can be obtained. The heat of summer, with the close bad air, is worse than the cold of

the winter. Besides this,' he adds, 'we are kept in a state of constant alarm by the incursions of the Isaurians.' It appears that these predatory tribes were particularly troublesome at this time, so that the people of Cucusus had to fly from their homes and seek protection for themselves and their families in the fortress of Arabissus, upwards of forty miles away. From the account which Chrysostom gives of these savage robbers, we can scarcely wonder at the terror they inspired. He tells us that, in their sudden incursions into the lowlands, they not only harried the country of all the cattle and property on which they could lay their hands, but set fire to the houses and farm-yards, and 'those whom they do not kill,' he says, 'they carry away and keep as slaves.' Describing what he suffered at this period, he states that he 'was obliged in the severest cold to fly from one place to another, and hide himself in dens and caverns.' 'At last I fled to Arabissus, hoping in this town, or rather in its castle, to find security. But my situation here is worse than imprisonment. Death is daily at our doors, for we are closely besieged by the barbarians, and with so large a number of us crowded into this little place we must soon expect a famine.'

What a change of life this was to the studious recluse! It amounted to a reversal of all his previous habits; and the effect of it on his bodily frame, and nervous system in particular, may be easily conceived. His letters for the first time manifest a morbid tone of feeling, while his anxiety to be delivered from the troubles and annoyances by which he was beset became daily more urgent and intense. Nor was he without hope that his wishes might be fulfilled. His friends in Constantinople renewed their efforts on his behalf at this time, and there appeared to be some prospect of success. The leading men in the Western Church still regarded Chrysostom's deposition as illegal and unjust, and de-

manded a general council for the purpose of inquiring more fully into the merits of the case. Honorius wrote a strong letter to his brother Arcadius, remonstrating with him for the part he had taken in the persecution, and spoke of the disasters (by a succession of storms and earthquakes) with which his capital was visited, as tokens of God's displeasure at his conduct in that matter. Innocent Bishop of Rome corresponded with his exiled brother, and took a warm interest in his case. Through his intervention a deputation of Western bishops arrived at Constantinople, furnished with letters of recommendation from the Roman Emperor, urging the recall of the patriarch. And hence Chrysostom had good grounds for the hope which he cherished, that his captivity would soon be at an end.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Looking at the hardships to which he was exposed at this period, we cannot wonder at the state of depression they were the means of producing, especially in his weakened state of health. But 'the law of the Spirit of life' always asserted its supremacy in the case of this Christian sufferer. Hence he soon recovers his composure, and breaks into his usual strain of thankfulness and resignation to the divine will. Writing to a friend at this period, we find him saying, 'We should be concerned about one thing only, which is, to arrive with a cheerful conscience at our common fatherland. This is the only sure and imperishable good.' To another friend he writes: 'It is the nature of (divine) love not to be subdued by an accumulation of sufferings; but, like the flame, it forces its way through them all, and burns only with the greater intensity because of them.' That is, it converts affliction into fuel for itself, and so consumes it. Besides these inward consolations, he was also sustained by the sympathy of many who loved him with no common love. Some of these kept up a close correspondence with him, and others travelled all the way to Armenia that they might minister to his necessities, and enjoy the benefit of his company and counsel. Besides those gracious women who went to Cucusus with that design, his friend Constantius of Antioch—the presbyter who superintended his missions there—shared his captivity for a time; and a noble youth of the name of Theodotus followed him from Constantinople, with the view of studying and preparing for the ministry under his direction. But the most interesting part of his correspondence at Cucusus consists in his letters to his mother, who was still alive, and bordering upon eighty years of age. In one of these he says to her: 'You have raised yourself above the dominion of nature, in bidding me exchange the city for the wilderness, the



It is, however, proper to mention, before passing away from this point, that throughout all the troubles which came upon him at Cucusus, and all the privations and discomforts to which he was there exposed, he never intermitted his labours in behalf of the Church generally, and of his own mission schemes in particular.<sup>1</sup> He wrote tracts and treatises, and letters of a public and private nature, which accumulated to some hundreds.<sup>2</sup> 'The Eastern Church was almost governed from the solitary cell of Chrysostom. He corresponded with all quarters; women of rank and opulence sought his solitude in disguise. The bishops of many distant sees sent him assistance, and coveted his advice. The Bishop of Rome received his letters with respect, and wrote back ardent commendations of his patience. The exile of Cucusus exercised perhaps more extensive authority than the Patriarch of Constantinople.'<sup>3</sup>

His enemies were not ignorant of this fact; and fearing that the authority he had acquired might prove dangerous to them, they resolved to put a stop to it by

security of repose for a life among the Isaurians, that I might not be driven to do anything dishonourable. Not only, therefore, do I thank you for my birth, but much more for the training you have given me, by which you have proved yourself a mother indeed.' At another time he thus tries to comfort her: 'I beg you to bear in mind that there is only one evil—sin. Power, reputation, glory among men, are all vanity. The way to heaven is through the deep sea of suffering. My intercourse with the holy Bishop of Cucusus has refreshed me not a little, so that I have become almost another man, and do not feel as if I were living in a strange place. I am encompassed by such a fulness of spiritual blessings, and my soul is so enriched and exalted, that I thank God without ceasing.'

<sup>1</sup> See notes appended to this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> 'Two hundred and forty-two of the epistles of Chrysostom are still extant. They are addressed to a great variety of persons, and show a firmness of mind much superior to that of Cicero in his exile. The fourteenth epistle contains a curious narrative of the dangers of his journey.'—GIBBON, vol. iii. 607. The contrast here instituted between Chrysostom and Cicero is striking, considering the sympathies of the writer.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. of Christianity*, by Dean Milman, vol. iii. 237.

getting him removed to a still greater distance from those who were interested in him, and likely to be influenced by him. Having an overwhelming majority of the bishops, monks, and other ecclesiastical forces on their side, they knew that the rulers of the State were in their hands, and that—to use a modern phrase—they were masters of the situation. Hence, though the most powerful men of that period, headed by the Emperor and Bishop of Rome, and supported by a multitude of nobles and statesmen throughout the East and West, exerted themselves strenuously in Chrysostom's favour, their efforts were utterly abortive. Theophilus and his synodical confederates *knew* that they could set Arcadius and all his ministers at defiance, and the parties in question also knew that such was the case. Instead, therefore, of yielding to the solicitations of Chrysostom's friends, they found it necessary to comply with the demands of his enemies, by ordering him to be removed from Cucusus to Pityus,<sup>1</sup>—a place on the north-east coast of the Black Sea, near to Mount Caucasus, and at the extreme border of the empire. It was, in short, the Siberia of the Eastern world. Of this movement the exile had heard through some of his correspondents at Constantinople; and in a letter to Innocent of Rome—one of the last ever written by him—he, after thanking him for his kind sympathy and aid, says: 'If I should be banished to a still more remote and desolate region, I shall carry with me no small consolation in thinking of your love.' In August of the year 407, two soldiers arrived from Constantinople with orders to convey the captive of Cucusus to the shores of the Black Sea. The parties who acted as the chief movers in this matter might easily have foreseen, as very probably they did,

<sup>1</sup> This was the place to which some of his more powerful enemies were banished by the infamous Eutropius, out of whose book Theophilus seems to have taken a leaf.

that such a journey would come to a speedy conclusion, and that their victim was much more likely to land in paradise than on the bleak sands of Pityus.

Be that as it may, we find that, before they had proceeded very far, the poor captive, with his slight frame quite worn out<sup>1</sup> by care and sickness, began to exhibit all the signs of complete exhaustion. As they passed through Pontus on the 13th of September, they came to the town of Comana. But Chrysostom, weary as he was, insisted on their taking him to a church five miles beyond it before they halted. There he rested that night, and had a dream,—suggested, no doubt, by the associations of the place, acting on the feverish state of his body. He dreamt that Basiliscus, a distinguished saint and martyr who had once been bishop of that church, appeared to him, and said, ‘Be of good cheer, brother John; to-morrow we shall be together.’ It is further related in the legends of the time, that Basiliscus had previously appeared in the same way to a presbyter of the congregation, bidding him prepare for brother John, who, he said, ‘will soon be here.’ It seems that Chrysostom had some presentiment that his own vision was about to be fulfilled, and he therefore entreated the soldiers to wait at that place till noon. This, however, they refused to do, alleging that their order forbade them to tarry on the road. But they had not proceeded more than three miles when they saw that their captive was sinking; and there being no other resting-place nearer, they went back to the church they had left. Feeling that the hour of release was just at hand, Chrysostom divested himself of his travelling garments; and, putting on his white priestly robes, with which he was covered ‘even to the feet,’ he ordered bread and wine to be brought. Pronouncing the words of consecration, he partook of what to him was the last supper in more

<sup>1</sup> *Tenui corpusculo*, as Erasmus calls it.

senses than one. Then kneeling down at the altar, he gave thanks, saying, 'The Lord be praised for all things,' and fell from his knees into his Master's arms, on the 14th of September 407, aged sixty years.

'Servant of God, well done !  
Rest from thy loved employ :  
The battle o'er, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master's joy.'

It only remains for us to add, that a crowd of Christian friends, as if drawn thither by some common impulse, came suddenly to the spot at which the white-robed body of the great preacher and faithful pastor of Constantinople was lying. Groups of virgins and monks, with other distinguished persons of both sexes, assembled together at the quiet country church from all parts of Syria, Cilicia, Pontus, and Armenia. 'John's little body,' says Erasmus, 'was honourably laid beside the bones of the saintly Basiliscus, within the communion rails of that church, and martyr was united to martyr.'

But his ashes were not allowed to rest in that remote and comparatively obscure spot. Eight months after his decease, Arcadius Emperor of the East was summoned away from his royal palace, his golden chariots, and his white mules, to join his dead partner Eudoxia, before Him 'by whom kings reign and princes decree justice.' Thither we may not follow them, nor shall we venture to judge them, lest we should be judged. We can only pity them both for having had the terrible misfortune to be connected with the career of one whose character they had not wisdom enough to appreciate, and whose name has cast a shadow upon theirs which will lie 'black and blackening' upon them till the end of time; while over him who became the victim of their folly, his immortality 'broods like the day,' gaining larger breadth and greater brightness as the ages roll on. Before he was thirty years in his grave, the rulers and bishops of

the East came to know that there had been 'a prophet among them,' with whom they had dealt as the priests and rulers of Judea had done with theirs. A deputation was sent to Comana, by whom the remains of Chrysostom were removed from the side of Basiliscus, and carried in state to the capital. Theodosius II. with the Bishop Proelus went to meet and conduct them from Asia Minor to Constantinople; and there in the 'Church of the Apostles,'<sup>1</sup> and in the presence of all the people, the son of Eudoxia knelt down on the coffin, and entreated forgiveness for the injustice which his parents had done to 'that pillar of the Church—that light of the truth—that herald of Christ—the Bishop John.'

When we look at Chrysostom cried down, driven from the chair of truth, and perishing in exile, we have another illustration of the strange fact, that the world does not know its best men, and only sees them in their just proportions when their tongues are silent, and their forms have passed away from the earth. Then, but not till then, do they wake up to a sense of their loss, and feel disposed to say—

'Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !'

The ancient worthies, whose names stand for ever in Paul's martyrology, the men of whom the world was not worthy, have had their successors in tribulation in almost all after ages. 'They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy): they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' And when we read

<sup>1</sup> It was in this church his remains were buried; but his bones were subsequently removed to Rome, and were deposited by Pope Urban VIII. in a chapel of St. Peter's which still bears the name of Chrysostom.

the story of Chrysostom, and of so many others who have in the high places of the field contended for the faith once delivered to the saints—who have had their names cast out as evil—who have lain in dungeons, fought with wild beasts, perished in the fires, or died under the tortures of the Inquisition,—in these, and their like, we see the tragic histories of the Hebrew worthies all rehearsed again. This was the sad end of so many men whose faces we would travel far to see, on whose lips we would hang as though an oracle were speaking, whom we would welcome to our houses as though we were to entertain angels, and the hem of whose garments we would rather touch than wear the purple of the Cæsars.

However we may account for it, there has often been something wonderfully offensive to the world in a man of surpassing merit. If gifts and graces met in him and shone with equal lustre, he was adjudged guilty of the sin for which there is no forgiveness: for in his greatness his rivals and enemies saw their own littleness; in his pure brightness they saw their own stained and despicable lives. His strength revealed to them their weakness; his rich affluence revealed their penury and empty show. They were mortified, and they became malignant. We need not paint the traitor, and the judge, and the multitudes on whom came the blood of the King of sufferers, as worse than all other men; for none others were ever tested so terribly as they. The Prince of Life could only die once, and He fell by their hands. In Him they saw the beauty of holiness, the flower and glory of humanity, the image of God; and not being drawn to Him, neutrality was impossible; and so terrible was the sight to their carnal eyes, that they could only cry at last, 'Away with Him, away with Him! crucify Him!' If it was so in the case of Jesus, who had so much to endear Him to the people, it was

natural to expect the same with the foremost of His followers. If there was, on the one hand, less of heaven in them than shone in the Master, to arouse the passions of the world ; on the other hand, they could not give bread to thousands in a desert place—they could not let a blind man see the sun and his mother's face—they could not make a dumb boy break out into a song, or give back to her parents' arms a little maiden who was dead. In this way, the people could look for nothing from a good man but his blessing and his prayers, his lessons and his life. They were less afraid of his power, and they were less obliged to his kindness.

In the case of the great subject of our biography, the most melancholy aspect of the closing scene is, that it was brought about by men who carried the Christian name. If his ruin had been wrought by heathen priests who saw the temples of the gods forsaken, and the ancient faith melting like snow before the breath and the brightness of this prince of preachers, we could only have said, 'Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel.' But the persecutions of this holy man offer a more fearful commentary on human nature. 'What are these wounds in thine hands?' 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' The men who professed themselves redeemed by the same blood, servants of the same Lord, heirs of the same promises, dealt the fatal blow. If they ever read the fifty-fifth Psalm again, as Chrysostom doubtless did in his banishment, they must have thought of him, and he of them, with strange emotions. And when the news reached Constantinople that at last the great man was dead, we can imagine his persecutors to have felt as those who shed another's blood are said to feel : they would give the world to see his eyelids quiver, and his life come back to the dead man at their feet.

Among many things that we have cause to regard

with fear and trembling, it is one of the most redeeming features of our times, and one of the finest triumphs of the gospel, that no man is now driven into exile, or fastened to the stake, or shot by some trooper's hand, because he is 'great in the sight of the Lord.' If any one asks the question (which the wise man even in his times forbade a man to ask), 'What is the cause that the former days were better than these?' we can only answer him by inquiring, 'What is the cause that the sun now rises in the West? or that the rivers are flowing backward in their courses?' In another sense than the prophet meant them, these words have now happily come true for the servants of God: 'They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.'

---

## NOTES.

## AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

'He found the nation of the Goths miserably overrun with Arianism. He ordained some of that country readers, deacons, and presbyters, and assigned them a church within the city, by whose industry he reclaimed many to the Catholic Church. And that his design might succeed better, he himself went often and preached there, making use of an interpreter to convey his discourse to the people, and prevailed with the most eloquent preachers about the town to do the like. And understanding that the Scythian Nomadæ that dwelt beyond the Ister were greatly disposed to entertain the gospel, but were destitute of any to preach it to them, he procured persons to undertake that work, and wrote to the bishops that bordered upon those parts to assist in it, and furnish out fit persons who might carry on the conversion of those countries. It grieved him not a little when he was told that even in Phœnicia, a country that lay within the heart of the empire, pagan idolatry was still the paramount religion. For the reformation whereof he engaged a company of zealous monks, whom he sent into these parts; and that they might not go without royal authority, he procured an edict from the Emperor, empowering them to pull down and destroy all the pagan temples. And because it was a matter of charge as well as difficulty, he did not think fit to burden the exchequer with it, but persuaded several rich and pious matrons to furnish out the expenses at their own charge. But though for the present things succeeded well, yet not long after the Gentiles made head against them, defended their temples, and



slew many of the monks, and wounded more. The exact time of his setting on foot this excellent design I cannot precisely fix ; though whether it was done anno 400, or immediately upon his advancement to the see of Constantinople, is not very material to inquire.'—CAVE's *Lives*, etc., iii. 277.

---

AT CUCUSUS.

'So active a piety as his soul was inspired with would not suffer him to be idle wherever he was. He preached frequently, and to a people that greedily entertained his instructions. Nor did he feed the poor by his doctrine only, but by his charity. A grievous dearth and scarcity raged at that time in those parts, and the poor found in him a common father, whose necessities he was enabled to relieve by the liberal supplies he received, as from others, so specially from his dear friend Olympias. Many that had been taken captive by the Isauri, he paid their ransom, and redeemed from a slavery worse than death. Nor did he confine his care and charge to any one place. He had heretofore set on foot a design of driving paganism out of Phœnicia, and by his endeavours a considerable progress had been made in it ; but now, to his no little grief, he understood that it went down the wind, and that the Gentiles had made insurrection, and fallen foul upon the persons employed in it. This sad news set him again on work ; some he sent thither, to others he earnestly wrote about it, that either in their persons or by their letters they would invite and encourage fit persons to undertake it, and support the spirits of the monks, who had met with such ill success in that employment. And that the work might not stand still for want of money to carry it on, he took order that charges should be allowed both for the building of churches and defraying the expenses of those who laboured in so good a work, and at every turn pressed others to be liberal upon this occasion. Nor did he forget his design of converting the Goths to Christianity, having formerly ordained Unitas, their countryman, bishop, and sent him thither, who had attempted the thing with mighty success ; after whose death he now understood that Moduaris, his deacon, was come to Constantinople with letters from the king of the Goths, requesting that another bishop might be sent among them. Afraid he was that the schismatical bishops at Constantinople would lay hold upon this occasion, and not only take upon them to consecrate a person, but such a one as should be wholly unfit for that affair. He wrote therefore in all haste to Olympias, that she would use all her interest to hinder or at least delay it for the present, and if possible send Moduaris privately to him, with whom he would easily adjust that matter.'—CAVE's *Lives*, 329.

---

CHURCHES OF PHŒNICIA.

'During his banishment he never ceased to take care of those infant churches of Phœnicia ; and being informed that the persecution was revived against them, and that the pagans in their fury had killed or wounded

several of the monks, he wrote a most pressing letter to Rufinus the priest to hasten thither, being persuaded that his presence would be sufficient to put an end to all these disorders. He begs him to write to him even on his journey, and promises him every possible assistance both from himself and others. Then he adds: "As to the relics of the holy martyrs, take no thought about them; for I have just sent the priest Terentius to the most pious Otreius Bishop of Arabissus, who has a quantity of them undoubtedly genuine, which in a few days I will send to you in Phœnicia. Be diligent to finish before winter the churches which are not yet roofed." These last words lead us to infer that these relics were designed for the consecration of the altars of these new churches. He wrote in the same way to the priest Gerontius, urging him to repair thither with speed; assuring him that he should stand in need of nothing, either for the buildings or for the necessities of the brethren, for that he had charged the priest Constantius to supply him. He prays likewise the priest Nicolaus to hasten the departure of Gerontius, and to send with him priest John, in order to strengthen that falling church by the help of so many good labourers. The priest John accordingly went on that mission; and Chrysostom wrote to Symeon and Maris, priests and monks of Apamia, entreating them to supply him with more good workmen to attend him into Phœnicia. He wrote also to the priests and monks who were labouring in the instruction of the pagans of Phœnicia; and lest the persecutions should dishearten them, and induce them to leave the country, he promises that they shall want nothing either in food or raiment. "Let none then terrify you," he adds, "for we have reason to hope for better things, as you will see by the copies of the letters from the venerable priest Constantius." He represents to them the courage of the apostles, and particularly of St. Paul, who preached even whilst imprisoned and in fetters, and converted the jailor; and exhorts them to continue firm and immovable, saying that he sends the priest John to comfort them, and bid them write to him and acquaint him with all their wants. His care was the same for the churches of Gothia;<sup>1</sup> and he wrote to the deacon Theodotus about them in the following terms: "However great the storm, however urgent the endeavours of those who strive to ruin the Church of Gothia, fail not yourselves to do your part; though ye gain nothing else by it (which, however, I do not believe), the reward of your good-will is always laid up for you with God. Therefore, dear brother, be not discouraged in your care and labour. Above all things pray, and continue daily to beg with fervency of God that He may restore peace to His Church. Meanwhile use all your endeavours, as I wrote to you before, to gain time in this affair." He undoubtedly means the ordination of the bishop, about which he had written to Olympias. He likewise wrote about the same to the Gothic monks who were in the monastery of Promotus at Constantinople.—FLEURY, *Ecc. Hist.* ii. 114 ss.

<sup>1</sup> This Gothia was probably not the country of the *Visigoths*, but that of the *Ostrogoths*, who remained in the eastern part of Scythia, about the mouth of the Don.

## XXIV.

### 'THE GOLDEN MOUTH.'

'The gentleness of heaven is on the sea :  
Listen ! the mighty being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder everlastingly.'

WORDSWORTH.

'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.'

THE preceding pages, it is thought, furnish some answer to the interesting question, By what means did this man, born more than fifteen centuries ago in a remote part of the world, with no hereditary advantages beyond thousands of his own and every other age, rise to such eminence, and leave behind him the greatest name of any who then lived in the East or in the West? Chrysostom was early left an orphan, he was not ambitious of place, and he died in exile. He left no family to guard his reputation and perpetuate his name ; he left no wealth for institutions sacred to his memory ; and whilst he lived, he trampled upon no man's greatness in order to eclipse him. He was simple in his tastes, severe in his habits, and notoriously a recluse.

As we have seen, he was not a universal favourite, for his enemies were more numerous than his friends, and in the end overpowered both them and him. He had not, among other disadvantages, that genial temper which wins golden opinions everywhere—that *Je ne sais quoi* which attracts the world they know not how,

and lays all hearts under some mighty and mysterious spell they know not what or why. He had strong convictions, and was not afraid in any place to utter them. Whatever he perceived to be truth, he told ; wherever he saw meanness, he denounced it ; wherever he saw hypocrisy, falsehood, and wrong, he exposed them with merciless severity. The men and women of his time furnished ample materials for his invectives, and then were very angry with him when he lashed their vices. The gospel had made comparatively little progress in the world at that time ; it had done little to soften the manners or exalt the morals of the men of Antioch and Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> The power of heathenism was indeed smitten, but it was not broken ; and its spirit mingled with and modified the spirit of the age, and rendered it intolerant to a severe Christian censor beyond anything in our day. No minister of the gospel is called on to wage such warfare now, or encounter such opposition. The devil and his emissaries exerted themselves to the uttermost then, in order to preserve the old state of things. They saw ancient institutions giving way, ancient systems dissolving, ancient principles melting into air before the word of the Lord. They tried to save the old and destroy the new. They failed, and they were mad. In the midst of this transition period Chrysostom appeared, fought his battles, and—in spite of partial successes—fell before the powers that opposed him.

And we cannot say that he fought with uncommon

<sup>1</sup> Owing partly to physical causes, and partly to the social and clerical annoyances by which he was disturbed there, his preaching assumed a sharper tone at Constantinople than it had at Antioch. His severity seems to have grown with his years and knowledge of the world ; and rich as it was in its materials and texture, it must be owned that it was sometimes very trying to those on whose heads it came, and who felt that 'the cap fitted them.' It was like Medea's crown—a thing of burning as well as a thing of beauty.

prudence, or that his weapons were always the best. He was an ascetic; his opinions were in some things contracted, and in others erroneous. He did not always join the wisdom of the serpent to the harmlessness of doves. He sometimes imagined he had a 'Thus saith the Lord' for it, when he was but 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'<sup>1</sup> Sometimes he took a man for a friend, and found him but a Judas in disguise. He sometimes forgot that word of a yet more famous preacher than himself, that there is 'a time to keep silence' as well as 'a time to speak.' His delicate health, his keen sensibilities, his emotional nature, were all unfavourable to his becoming a king of men; for it needs coolness, an iron will, a self-contained man, to place the world under his feet.

And yet the fact remains, that Chrysostom has earned imperishable glory, has written books that can never die, has filled the world with his fame, is more widely known this hour than ever; whilst kings whose sceptres ruled and awed millions are forgotten, and famous men in every line of life, who flourished and were praised by countless tongues, have passed away, and none can this day tell their names. All this is true, and our wonder is only heightened when we look at this immortal man, and find in him no one quality in which he clearly stood alone. His shortcomings he had in common with thousands of the nameless dead; his holiness has been

<sup>1</sup> The ethical principles inculcated by him were not always purely Christian. On the contrary, they contained much that was rather traditional than scriptural—caught from the spirit of his own times, not drawn from the study of the New Testament. Monachism, celibacy, asceticism, penance, and something approaching to saint and mass worship (though it did not quite amount to that), were among the errors that clung to him. But the natural effect of these errors was largely counteracted by the saving principle on which he always insisted, that everything must be brought to the test of the word. No man ever inculcated more strenuously the rule laid down by Paul—a rule which embodies the right and *duty* of private judgment—'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'

rivalled by saints of all ages ; his wisdom has been often surpassed ; his courage does not remain unmatched ; his varied fortunes have often found a repetition in the lives and deaths of good men ; and even his amazing eloquence has been approached by this one and that in the annals of the Christian Church.

The question then comes back, How are we to account for the extraordinary place which this Father has gained, and the reputation he has won ? The answer, we apprehend, lies in this, that Chrysostom came to occupy a commanding position in the Church, where those singular qualities that met in him were allowed full scope ; that he was a man of fine genius, of high culture, of ardent piety, of surpassing eloquence ; that selfishness was dead in him ; that he knew no fear, and sought no favour, and scorned all patronage and secular advantages ; that the Spirit of God dwelt in him, and gave him that rare insight into the great mystery of godliness which enabled him to open the holy oracles with a truthfulness and telling power beyond all who had gone before him since the books of inspiration were written ; that with a calm soul he confronted the storm, and with dauntless courage breasted the angry waves, believing that God was for him and in him, and was being glorified by all he did and suffered. He saw in himself simply an instrument of Jehovah, to be exalted or abased in His service, according to His own good pleasure. He felt very much as Paul did when he said, ' Now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there ; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.'

His lot was cast in trying times, and his light shone the brighter for the dark clouds which gathered round him. He fought often against fearful odds, and the sword he grasped was tested all the better, and the arm that wielded it revealed the more clearly its strength and skill. If he had lived in more peaceful days, he could never have given such assurance of the man he was. The adverse winds braced him, and brought out his powers to the uttermost. His eloquence was nursed and brought to perfection amidst applauses on the one hand, and the plots and passions of men against him on the other. It needed a profligate court, a venal ministry, a pleasure-seeking nobility, the schemings of ecclesiastics, the hypocrisy of monks, the dissolving views of the old passing away and melting into the new, to teach him those final lessons which went, through the grace of God, to make him the man he showed himself. It is needless to single out this or that, and say, Herein lay his strength; for his strength did not lie in this or in that, any more than the glory of the rainbow consists in any single colour, or than the breadth and beauty of some river lie in the influx of any one of its fifty tributaries.<sup>1</sup> The greatness of his fame did not arise even from the fact of such varied and splendid powers meeting in this one man, and that they were heightened and brightened in their shining lustre by his eminent piety. With him, as with all who have ever proved their greatness, the fitting occasion must come. There must be not only the man, but the hour. As with Elijah and Paul, Luther and

<sup>1</sup> There was no stiffness, no mannerism, no uniformity about his style of speaking. In matter, manner, voice, he was always natural, and therefore always new. For the same reason his discourses were marked by a wonderful degree of variety. The tender and the vigorous, the serious and the lively, the lofty and the familiar, entreaty and reproof, warning and consolation, were so skilfully and eloquently intermingled, that the heart of his hearer was assailed on all sides, and every faculty of his soul called into action.

Knox, so with this Father: when the man came, the hour was come. He went into the arena of conflict predestined and prepared for him; he put on his armour; God said to him, 'Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be;' and when at last he fell upon the field, he fell a conqueror in the foremost ranks of the Lord God of Sabaoth.

There is no doubt that there were some elements of greatness in this man so extraordinary as to deserve and to repay a thoughtful consideration. It is natural that we should, first of all, single out his marvellous gift which is suggested by the name 'Chrysostom,' or 'golden mouth,' so long and so universally accorded him for his eloquence. Our imagination can hardly picture to us this Christian orator in his grandest efforts, when every eye was fixed on him, and every heart beat faster, and every word seemed the fittest, and every passage so complete, and when he rose to the supreme moment and climax of his discourse, and men were carried away as by a flood, and the force of truth alone was felt, and the triumph of the orator was quite lost sight of. Men left their business to hear him; they left their amusements and pleasures; and pagans often left the temples of their gods to throng the Christian church. There was something so human in this man which touched their sympathies; there was something so divine that awed their spirits. The sublimity of an eloquence so natural and so impressive surprised and ravished the hearers, and awoke in them emotions they never felt before. Now they were ready to break out in plaudits, and now they were in tears.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'He was,' says an able German critic, 'made for public speaking. He possessed by nature a strong, penetrating, comprehensive intellect, a quick invention, an exhaustless imagination, a rich vein of wit, great self-possession and depth of feeling, a keen faculty of observation, and a practical turn of mind; in a word, all the highest and most indispensable



Chrysostom wrote much which has been preserved to us ; the diligence of short-hand writers has preserved more, and we are thankful. But there was much that could not be preserved. The flashing eyes, the striking attitudes, the varying voice that now spoke in whispers and now thundered, are wanting. The charm of the living man is gone, his tender accents, his terrible denunciations. And the audience is gone, that great throng which watched his every movement, which now wept, and now clapped their hands. Yet the *littera scripta* remains, and it is precious. Who can tell how many have lighted their torches at this flame—have caught the holy fire at this shrine ?

The ceaseless play of fancy on the pages of Chrysostom is something wonderful. Even the commonest topics are illustrated and enforced, not only by a diction of matchless energy and beauty, but by similes which must have caught every ear that heard them, and lingered in the memory ever after. The rich profusion of nature furnished this great teacher with images and metaphors as boundless and varied as herself. To him no flower that bloomed, no bird that gave out its morning or evening song, no insect of a day, no cloud that crossed the sky, was meaningless. His eye detected secret sympathies, and saw symbolic truths in all it rested on. He was as truly a child of nature as he was a child of grace, and his mind was stored with spoils from every field he trod, from every scene he witnessed. The music of the spheres seemed to fall on his enchanted ear, and the mysteries of the universe opened to his enraptured eye ; and so he was constantly telling men what they

qualities of a good orator. And though described by his enemies as proud, repulsive, dark, and unsympathizing, he was nevertheless thoroughly noble, inspired with zeal for the good of men, and perfectly fearless wherever the cause of truth and right was to be defended.'—PANIEL's *History of Christian Eloquence*.

were quite familiar with, and yet had never seen till it was shown them.

And this explains the freshness of his discourses and writings to this day ; for it is true that, after fifteen hundred years, there is nothing fresher yet, as there is nothing finer, for devout men to read. He described things as he saw and felt them ; he worked from no copy, he drew from the grand original. Hence the vivid sense of reality we have whilst we read him, and imagine ourselves among the crowds—now asleep for ages—that hung upon his lips. We can almost imagine their eager gleaming eyes, when, as they heard some sentence, a light from heaven broke in upon their minds ; and anon we are ready to answer tears with tears when a stroke of pathos follows and dissolves their hearts. He could touch all chords, and command all the passions at his will. Multitudes bent before him, as reeds and willows bend before the wind. Their minds yielded to a new power, their hearts were stirred, and their imaginations carried captive. They surrendered themselves to a guide who, with a hand so strong and a heart so true, could lead them as he chose.<sup>1</sup> No scornful critic dared to speak lightly of that finished style, that quickening oratory, those enchanting pictures, those momentous truths, those outbursts of emotion, which all went to form a discourse of Chrysostom, and which recalled to scholars the names of only two other men, whose glory as orators was to fill the world, and last till the judg-

<sup>1</sup> 'He knew how to let himself gracefully down to the capacity of an uncultivated audience, and to speak with a perspicuity, simplicity, and naturalness which fully explain why not merely the higher classes, but also the middle and lower, heard him preach with so much delight and admiration. He strove to avoid all obscurity of language, chose the most familiar words, and did not hesitate to use the phrases of common life, when it was necessary for greater clearness of expression. And this perspicuity appeared not in the choice of words alone, but also in the course of thought as well.'—PANEL.

ment-day. He had learnt all the avenues to the heart, and all its dens and darkest windings, for he had studied his own,—had explored its secrets, and sounded its depths. He was a master of the art of persuasion ; and, warring with celestial weapons, he carried the citadel by storm, and made men in love with the conquests he had made, and the new chains that bound them.

Our readers will have learnt, long before reaching this chapter, that Chrysostom was no mere ‘master of sentences,’ no amateur performer who worked for effect, in the common meaning of that phrase. He *did* indeed work for effect—to turn men to righteousness, and win them to God ; but if they only applauded the orator, he counted that all was lost. He sought to draw no admiring eyes upon himself, to elicit no compliments. It is true he burned with eagerness to hear that word ‘Well done;’ but it was to come from other lips, and on another day. In the sight of men the preacher was content to be nothing, that Jesus Christ might be the all in all. He held himself in the background, and only presented ‘the beauty of holiness’ and the glory of Jesus to be admired and embraced. The cross, and that dear Lord who hung on it, were exhibited in the most impressive aspects, and the grace revealed in this wonder of wonders was unfolded with a copiousness, a wealth of imagery, a splendour of diction, and a burning eloquence, which made the hearers for the instant forget the preacher in order to ‘behold the Man’—that Man of sorrows who died to save them.

The great preachers of the Roman Church who have earned for themselves a reputation which promises to be immortal, only produced at distant intervals those sermons which were the marvel of their day, and are now in the hands of millions. They gathered in their finest powers, and girt themselves for the task ; they pondered their subject long, they sought out images,

they polished sentences, they reconstructed paragraphs, they laboured to produce an artistic whole, a finished thing, to be admired by all men of taste for ever. How unlike to all this were the preparation and preaching of Chrysostom! His mind was like a well which could give out the water of life to-day and to-morrow with equal copiousness; and he often preached for days in succession, and was always equal to himself, the same incomparable man.<sup>1</sup>

And this leads us to mention another feature in the character of this great preacher. The Spirit of God dwelt in him in an extraordinary measure, and worked in him with extraordinary power. This was the secret of his constant inspiration—the indwelling Spirit with His sevenfold gifts. And hence came his rare insight into the meaning of the word, and his realizing sense of its power and glory. His soul enjoyed a perpetual illumination, and the holy fire which burned in his heart was fed continually by an unseen hand. Hence it was with him as with Paul when he said, 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.' Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. The one was ever full, and therefore the other was ever open. He was constantly receiving, and therefore he was constantly giving out. 'And, moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise

<sup>1</sup> Candour, however, requires us to confess that, in consequence of the frequency with which he had to speak, and the want of time for preparation, he occasionally repeats the same thought, and sometimes heaps together explanations, figures, and examples, to enforce lessons which are too obvious to be mistaken, and too trite to admit of much ornament. It is like *trimming* a moleskin jacket with gold lace.

are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.'

There was comparatively little in this holy man to obstruct the operations of the great Teacher. He was clothed with humility, and found the promise true, that God giveth grace to the humble. He lay open to higher influences, as the fields in summer lie open to the fostering sunshine and the falling dew. His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in that law he meditated day and night. Hence his fittest picture is found in the tree of the Psalmist, planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf shall not wither. Chrysostom held constant communion with heaven; hence no calamities in life could crush him, and no fear of man could scare him from his work. His motto was, 'that no power could injure that man who did not wrong himself, did not abandon and betray his own highest interests.' He did indeed encounter fearful storms; but he might be likened to some 'exceeding high mountain,' around whose base there is the wild war of elements, but whose unseen summit is above the angry clouds, and bathed in the golden sunlight.

It is probable that he had no great confidence in man, and his experience was not fitted to inspire him with any romantic notions as to the dignity of human nature; but his faith in God was boundless, and his faith in the possibilities of man was never shaken, and so he held on his way, and never halted till the setting of the sun. His reward was not here. It is true that his tender heart was not insensible to love, and he gave back all he got, and still confessed himself a debtor. But the forces which supported him and carried him forward in his grand career were not fed by the ministry of love, and were rather augmented—as they ever are in heroes and martyrs—by the opposition he encountered. The cause he worked for was the cause of God, and he knew that

God and truth never die, and must conquer in the end. If he had not 'the praise of men,' he never sought it, and was not disappointed. Nothing could sour this man, who expected nothing. He saw how his divine Lord was during His whole life in the valley of humility, in conflict with the enemy ; and yet, when His sun seemed to set behind the darkest cloud, He was but completing that work which forms His crowning glory, which issued in defeating 'the gates of hell,' and which is the theme of that song they sing in heaven. So this illustrious servant was well content to be as the Master, and postpone his honours till he had ended his course and earned the martyr's crown. His arms might grow weak, and his eyes dim with age, or his enemies might put him in chains ; but his great unconquerable spirit remained unbroken.

And this is the praise of Chrysostom. Even his extraordinary eloquence could never have raised him to the place he occupies in the eyes of men. Demosthenes was a great orator, and was a great coward. But the eulogium might have been pronounced over this famous Father, which was pronounced over Knox when his body was lowered into the grave, 'There lies he who never feared the face of man.' None ever vindicated the majesty of the Christian minister more grandly than he did ; none ever more vividly reproduced that scene when Paul preached before the Roman governor with his guilty companion by his side, and 'Felix trembled.' This magnificent man, with faith in his heart, with truth on his lips, and heaven in his eye, was the finest sight earth had then to show, and the Church he loved and served so well will guard his memory and rehearse the story of his life till time shall be no more.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The great secret of his power, as we have noticed in one of the previous chapters, was his faith in God, and in the force of God's truth. This, combined with his knowledge of human nature in its general (not

It is only in the Church that such beautiful characters are formed, and such noble lives exhibited. The heathen world has never produced a Chrysostom, just as Spitzbergen has never produced the cedars of Lebanon. In both cases the atmosphere forbade it. The lustre of a Socrates or a Seneca becomes dim in the presence of this man. The power of philosophy is weak in comparison with the inspiring virtue of the cross. The former can teach contempt of the world, it can chill and steel the heart; but the latter can give life, can give back to man the powers which he had lost. In philosophy we have the wisdom of the world; in the gospel we have the power of God.

D. N.

individual characteristics, formed the chief cause of his success as a spiritual teacher. If 'the proper study of mankind is man,' Chrysostom was a rare proficient in this branch of knowledge.

THE END.









